THE PREACHER'S ENCYCLOPEDIA

Other Volumes

SUNDAY AFTER THE ASCENSION TO ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

TWELFTH TO LAST SUNDAYS AFTER PENTECOST

ADVENT TO QUINQUAGESIMA

THE PREACHER'S ENCYCLOPEDIA

Compiled and Edited under the Supervision of

MGR ANGEL HERRERA

Bishop of Malaga

English Version Translated and Edited by

MGR DAVID GREENSTOCK, S.T.L.

Rector of the English College, Valladolid

With Forewords by

Archbishop Cardinale and the late Archbishop O'Hara

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FOREWORD

By the Most Reverend

HYGINUS E. CARDINALE

Apostolic Delegate to Great Britain

'fins work has the distinction of having two separate Forewords—for a very simple reason.

The late Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Gerald P. O'Hara, was the one who really inspired both the publishers and the translator to undertake this truly great labour of translation and adaptation. He saw the potential value of the original *Palabra de Cristo* and was keen to see an English version of it, in spite of all the difficulties.

Unfortunately, he did not live to see the work in print, due to the long delay which is inevitable in a work of this size and description. However, before his death he wrote a Foreword in its praise, and as a tribute to his memory it has been included here just as he wrote it.

His insight into the future was inspired, because the recent decisions of the Vatican Council with regard to the liturgy and to preaching make this work an invaluable one at the present time. The way it is set out in its various sections makes it possible for any priest, no matter how busy he may be in other ways, to find more than abundant material for his mission of preaching.

The Scripture texts give the setting, which the liturgical section adorns, while the comments on the Epistle and Gospel of the day enable the user of the work to select his themes in accordance with the mind of the best and most modem commentators. The Fathers of the Church are brought into the priest's practical life and become a part of his preaching. There is no more sure way than this of thinking according to the mind of the Church.

But this Avork has another advantage which must not be passed over lightly. The priest who uses it properly will discover in it abundant material for his spiritual reading and meditations. Quotations or summaries of the great writers and preachers of the past are interwoven with the best in our modem English Catholic literature in such a way that it will be easy for the priest to use them and adapt them to the needs of his own people.

The sermon schemes are complete, but they are presented in such a way that the priest who uses them is not the slave of the work itself, but rather its master. He must select and modify according to his needs. All the necessary material is at his hand for him to make his own combination of ideas for his sermons, in accordance with the needs of his people.

All these factors make this work unique. It breaks entirely new ground, being so much more than a mere sermon book. From the technical point of view it is obvious that much care has been given to its preparation and I have no hesitation in endorsing to the full my predecessor's gratitude to all those who had any part in this enormous work. The magnitude of that task is obvious when we remember that the original consists of eight volumes each of over a thousand pages all of which had to be put through a fine scrutiny in order to select the material which is best suited to English-speaking countries.

Gladly, therefore, I add my mede of praise to that of Archbishop O'Hara, together with my blessing to those who had a hand in its production and also to all those who will benefit from its use.

* H. E. CARDINALE

Apostolic Delegate to Great Britain

Original Foreword by the Most Reverend

GERALD PATRICK O'HARA

Late Apostolic Delegate to Great Britain

A packet of Bishop Herrera's *Palabra de Cristo* arrived just as I was setting out on a long journey by motor with the Coadjutor Bishop of ♦Portsmouth We picked one volume out at random and, when we had finished our breviaries, Monsignor Holland and I began to leaf through it together and exchange comments. First it was the generous scale of the enterprise that took our breath away; then the courageous industry of the good Bishop and his collaborators who had carried it out so thoroughly.

Of course, anyone who knew *El Debate* of Madrid in the days of Angel Herrera's brilliant editorship might have been prepared for something like this, once he became a priest and a bishop and applied his mind to furnishing priests with resources for preaching. His newspaper had made its mark internationally, not only by its editorial comment, but also by its magnificent supplements on special subjects. There was one on tobacco that ran to a hundred pages!

Once we had taken the general measure of the work, to test the detail, Monsignor Holland and I chose the 22nd Sunday after Pentecost describing the celebrated 'Render to Caesar' scene. I believe that particular Sunday fell the very next day; we were certainly travelling on a Saturday.

Like the rest of the Sundays, it claims two hundred pages and more of text. The extracts from Sacred Scripture bearing on Epistle and Gospel cover a score of double-columned pages.

After general commentaries and an account of the historical background of the famous Gospel come copious selections from the *Fathers* beginning with St John Chrysostom and St Augustine on the main argument; St Thomas Aquinas on other themes; chapters on the Investiture Question and Gallicanism, both clerical and political. There are various authors, beginning with St Thomas of Villanova, writing on civic duty, liberalism and the like. There follows the section devoted to papal documents, rich in extracts from Pope Leo XIII's great encyclicals. St Thomas à Becket and St Thomas More each have a separate niche in the Historical and Literary Miscellany. But perhaps the most striking effort is the hundred pages of sermon plans. There is the material for twenty-one massive, sculptured discourses, all complete with quotations and references. A man could quarry anything here from a five-minute *fervorino* to a full-scale university conference.

♦Now Bishop of Salford.

La Palabra de Cristo is an organic treasury of texts for the study of Sunday and Feastday homilies. There are ten volumes, each of 1,300 and more pages. Each Sunday has about 150-200 pages of text. The matter is divided into eight sections. First are the *Sacred Texts,* Episdes and Gospels and passages from the Old and New Testament, each touch on the several themes. These are followed by *General Commentaries* with Liturgical background and Notes on the exegesis and moral application of the texts. There are copious quotations from the homilies, commentaries and treatises of the *Fathers.* Then the *Theologians:* St Thomas Aquinas is always quoted *per longum at latum.* There are other scholastics quoted, the new as well as the old. The volumes are enriched by excerpts from the spiritual classics bearing on each day's main themes; for example, Saints Teresa and John of the Cross; Bossuet, Bourdaloue, Francis de Sales, Newman, Faber and others.

Papal Encyclicals from Leo XIII onwards dealing with the main themes of each day are frequently quoted. Then there is a Historical and Literary Miscellany containing striking incidents or passages culled from a variety of sources and illustrating the main arguments. Finally the Sermon Plans. There are usually over twenty' examples, each sermon worked out in considerable detail with appropriate references to the previous sections.

I was delighted to learn that steps had been taken to have this treasure-trove minted into English; more delighted still to learn that Dr David Greenstock, S.T.L., Vice-Rector* of the English College, Valladolid, would do the work. He is a ripe theologian, an industrious and penetrating writer. He has drunk deep in Spain itself from many of the springs that Bishop Herrera has channelled into his torrential text. Dr Greenstock has reduced the original ten volumes of *Palabra de Cristo* to four. That he has managed to select and compress the exuberant material into four volumes I can only marvel! Bishop Herrera gave every permission necessary for substituting quotations from English spiritual writers where advisable. But that only increased the labours, if not of translation, at least of research and adaptation.

To say that I wish these volumes well is an understatement. One greatly regrets that such a treasurc-trove was not available years ago. If, during the previous week, one could only read the abundant material available for each Sunday, what a gain it would be to our own lives and what a deep, rich note would sound from our pulpits! The Fathers, Pontiffs and Theologians of the Church would blend in its resonance. The flock would look up and this time be really pastured.

To confine oneself to the Fathers alone, we all know that, when the Holy Father authorized the recent simplification of the breviary,

* He has since been appointed Rector and created a Domestic Prelate.

he wrote yearningly of the loss of the patristic homilies and invited us to make up by reading the Fathers privately. Here is a practical way to respond to what otherwise might remain an unfulfdled aspiration. Here one can read the Fathers with one's eye on the well-defined target of next Sunday's sermon.

ΛΠ those who have made this production possible deserve our sincere congratulations and above all our deepest thanks.

Fluminis impetus laetificat civitatem Dei!

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

Confronted with this first volume of the translation of the monumental *La Palabra de Cristo* the busy priest may wonder how he can be expected to read and digest all the material assigned to each Sunday in time to prepare for his sermon. Faced with this obvious difficulty, the publishers have asked the translator, as one familiar with the original work, of which this is not merely a translation, but also an abbreviation, to give his ideas on the subject. Each one should use the book in the way best suited to his needs, but the following suggestions may be of some help. They are, however, merely suggestions.

Clearly, some time must be devoted to reading through the whole of the material, if possible; therefore the obvious thing to do is to begin this early on in the week, and not to leave it until the very end. It would be a fatal mistake to turn at once to the Sermon Schemes in the hope of finding something suitable, and then work backwards in order to expand the scheme. For one thing, that would mean a complete misunderstanding of the purpose of the schemes. They are not intended to be ready-made sermons, but merely guides under different headings, each one containing sufficient matter for several sermons. They are, in any case, too long to be preached as they stand. It is far better to make your own scheme as you go along; if that is your object then there is no reason why you should not use one of the schemes to be found in this book as a guide—that is the purpose of them.

If the book is used as spiritual reading—and it is clear from a glance at it that it can be so used with profit—the making of a scheme to fit the Sunday will not present any real difficulty.

For those who are suddenly confronted with the necessity to prepare a sermon the following suggestions may be of use. Apart from the index, a beginning might be made at the liturgical section, followed up by a reading through of the explanation of the Epistle and Gospel, all of which is dealt with in Section II of each Sunday.

Out of this preliminary reading should come one or two ideas for your sermon, which should be noted down at once. You can then follow them up in the other sections, especially that devoted to the teaching of the Fathers of the Church. After this, turn to the final section to see if any of these ideas are already contained in the schemes which are to be found there. If they are, then you can study the presentation, and if you do not like it, all well and good. Adapt it as you please; that is its purpose. In any case, do not at once attempt to use all the material found in that scheme. Select that part of it which fits in with the ideas you have already developed and adapt it to your purpose.

Finally, by turning back to Section I you will find some scriptural texts which can then be introduced into their proper place in your own scheme.

You can be quite sure that, if you use this work in the right way, your sermons will gain in originality of presentation and richness of doctrine, because they will rest on the sure basis of the Scriptures and the Fathers of the Church.

So far no mention has been made of the section devoted to papal texts. Selections of them have been included in this work because there are times when a priest has to address some Sodality or Catholic Action group, and then he may need such material as this. The section dealing with these texts has been greatly abbreviated (in some cases a mere summan has been given) in order to leave m for other points which may be of more use to the priests doing parish work.

The translator would like to take advantage of this occasion in order to thank all those who have helped in any way towards the completion of this first volume. His thanks go especially to his Lordship the Bishop of Malaga for giving permission to the translator to cut and adapt the original in any way necessary for its greater usefulness in the English-speaking world. It must be made clear, however, that while being grateful to others, the translator alone takes full responsibility, not merely for the translation, but also for the selection of passages for this English version and the insertion of other material not to be found in the original.

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The First Sunday oj Lent

THE TEMPTATIONS OF CHRIST

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: 2 Cor. 6. 1-10. Gospel: Matt. 4. 1-11 (Luke 4. 1-13)

Texts which refer to fasting

1. *We must fast:*

This ceremony you are to observe for all time. On the tenth day of the seventh month you will keep a fast; no work is to be done by citizen or alien that day. It is a day of atonement on your behalf, to cleanse you from all fault, and make you clean in the Lord's sight. Lev. 16. 29-30.

Time now, the Lord says, to turn the whole bent of your hearts back to me, with fasting and with mourners' tears. It is your hearts, not the garments you wear, that must be torn asunder. Joel 2. 12-13.

Can you persuade the men of the bridegroom's company to fast, while the bridegroom is still with them? No, the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them; then they will fast, when that day comes. Luke 5. 34-35.

Cf. Acts 13. 2-3; 14. 22; 27. 9; Rom. 13. 13; 2 Cor. 11. 27; 1 Peter 5. 8.

2. *The merit offasting:*

(a) as mourning for some disaster:

Cf. Judith 20. 26; 4. 8; Zach. 7. 2-6; Matt. 9. 15; 17. 20.

(b) to appease God's anger and obtain his pardon:

Prayer, fasting, and alms, said he, here is better treasure to lay up than any store of gold. Tob. 12. 8. Cf. Judith 8. 6.

All that day they fasted, and wore sackcloth, and covered their heads with ashes, and tore their garments about them. 1 Mach. 3. 47.

Entreat the Lord they did, and with one accord, for his mercy; wept they and fasted, and kept on their knees for three days together. 2 Mach. 13. 12.

With that the Ninevites showed faith in God, rich and poor alike, proclaiming a fast and putting on sackcloth; nay, the king of Nineve himself, when word of it reached him, came down from his throne, cast his robe aside, put on sackcloth and sat down humbly in the dust. . . . Thus, when God saw them amending their lives

in good earnest, he spared them, in his mercy, their threatened punishment. Jonas 3. 5-10.

3. *The spirit in which we should fast:*

Why hadst thou no eyes for it, say they, when we fasted; why didst thou pass by unheeding, when we humbled ourselves before thee? Fasting, when you follow' your own whim, distrain upon all your debtors! Naught comes of it but law-suit and quarrelling; angry blows profane it. A better fast you must keep than of old, ere plea of yours makes itself heard above. With such fasting, with a day's penance, should I be content? Is it enough that a man should bow down to earth, make his bed on sackcloth and ashes? Think you, by such a fasting-day, to win the Lord's favour? Nay, fast of mine is something other. The false claim learn to forgo, ease the insupportable burden, set free the over-driven, away with every yoke that galls! Share thy bread with the hungry, give the poor and the vagrant a welcome to thy house; meet thou the naked, clothe him; from thy own flesh and blood turn not away. Isaias 58. 3-7.

Again, when you fast, do not show it by gloomy looks, as the hypocrites do. They make their faces unsightly, so that men can see they are fasting; believe me, they have their reward already. But do thou, at thy times of fasting, anoint thy head and wash thy face, so that thy fast may not be known to men, but to thy Father who dwells in secret; and then thy Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward thee. Matt. 6. 16-18.

4. *Fasting for the dead:*

Whereupon all their fighting men went out, marching all through the night, and took down his body and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Bethsan; reaching Jabes-Galaad, they burned them there, and carried off their bones to burial in the wood of Jabes. And they fasted seven days to lament him. 1 Kings 31. 12-13.

. . . mourned they and wept, and fasted till evening came, for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the Lord's people, men of Israel's race, that lay fallen in battle. 2 Kings 1. 12.

Then, while it was still full day, they came together to eat, and would have David eat with them; but he took an oath, The Lord punish me as I deserve, and more than I deserve, if I taste bread or any other food before set of sun! 2 Kings 3. 35.

5. *Biblical examples of fasting:*

And now for another forty days and forty nights I lay at the Lord's feet, without food or drink, in amends for the sin you had committed against the Lord, your defiance of his displeasure. Deut. 9.18.

And at Masphath they assembled, and drew water which they poured out before the Lord, and fasted that day, and made confession there to the Lord of their sin. 1 Kings 7. 6.

David still interceded for him with the Lord, keeping strict fast and passing his nights on the ground; he would not humour his counsellors when they came and bade him rise to his feet again, nor would he take food with them. 2 Kings 12. 16.

Most fervently, in his great dismay, Josaphat betook himself to prayer, proclaiming a fast for the w hole of Juda. 2 Par. 20.3.

There, by the Ahava river, I proclaimed a fast; we would do penance, and ask of the Lord our God a safe journey for ourselves, for the children w ho went with us, and for all that was ours. Esdras 8.21.

For a long time after hearing this news I kept my house, all tears and lament; I fasted, and sought audience with the God of heaven in prayer. Neh. 1. 4.

At that Sara withdrew to an upper room of the house, and for three days and nights would neither eat nor drink; all this time she spent in prayer, begging with tears that God would free her of the suspicion. Tob. 3. 10-11.

So it was everywhere; never a province, tow'n or district the cruel edict reached but there was mourning and fasting, wailing and weeping among the Jewish folk, and of sackcloth and ashes many of them made their beds. Esther 4. 3.

Then Esther sent word, Go and muster all the Jews thou canst find in Susan, and pray for me. Spend three days and nights without food or drink, while I and my maidens fast too. Then I will break the law at my life's risk, by appearing in the king's presence unsummoned. Esther 4. 16.

Cf. Ps. 34. 13; Jerem. 69. 6; Dan. 10. 3; Ex. 34. 28.

SECTION IL GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LENT

A: Historical Notes

The forty days fast before Easter was officially instituted by the Council of Nicaea in 325 but the practice of fasting dates back to the very beginning of the Church. From the Pastor of Hermas and from the Didache we know that, in apostolic times, there were two fasting days every week, namely Wednesday and Friday, on which days the custom was to rise early, recite the triple prayer of Terce, Sext, and None, and celebrate Mass at sunset.

The idea of a forty day period of fasting originated almost certainly as a reminder of our Lord's fast and began on the 6th Sunday before Easter. Since the Sundays were not fast days the actual period of the fast was only thirty-six days. Accordingly, in the seventh century the beginning of this penitential period was put forward to Ash Wednesday.

B: Characteristics of Lent

The preacher should keep the following in mind:

1. *Fasting:*

In ancient times it was most strict, the faithful abstaining from all food and drink until after the evening Mass at sunset.

2. *The stational Mass:*

In Jerusalem Mass was not said during the week days of Lent as a symbol of mourning and penance. In Rome, on the contrary, it was celebrated in a special way. Each day, at the hour of None when their work was over, the faithful gathered at a church where the Pope and his attendants were waiting. After the collect had been sung the litanies were intoned and the procession was formed to the stational church, where Mass was said. This stational church varied from day to day and frequently inspired the liturgical form of the Mass. For instance, the fact that the stational church for the Thursday following Ash Wednesday was that of St George provides the reason for the Gospel story of the Centurion read on that day.

3. *Public penance:*

From the fifth century the Church established the practice of public penance during Lent. From Ash Wednesday until Holy Thursday the penitents, dressed in sackcloth and ashes, took their place at the doors of churches and monasteries. They assisted at the opening parts of the Mass but were dismissed at the Offertory. Lent is still a time of reconciliation and purification (2 Cor. 6. 3); for which reason missions are held and special sermons on this theme.

4. *The catechumens:*

During Lent those who were to receive baptism on the Vigil of Easter were prepared, not merely by prayer and fasting, but also by more intense instruction and with special rites. (Cf. Notes on 3rd Sunday of Lent.) Instruction and preaching are still one of the main features of Lent in accordance with can. 1346.

C: Lent and the life of the Christian

In the Middle Ages Lent influenced the social life of the people as well as the religious. 'The Fathers,' says Cardinal Schuster, 'in accordance with the civil legislation of Byzantium, simply enjoin the observance, determine the rites and explain the motives of the penitential time and the benefits to be derived from it. Thus, through many centuries, almost down to our own time, Lent was regarded as the support of Christian training, the "truce of God" during which period even the law courts and the places of amusement were closed, the whole body of the faithful put aside all their concerns

and endeavoured, by practices of penance and by liturgical instruction, to renew their spiritual energy in order to rise to a holier life with Christ risen and triumphant over death.'*

In former times, therefore, Lent was a time of annual retreat for our Christian ancestors. Nowadays its celebration is confined to the narrow limits of our churches, possibly because modern conditions render the use of the ancient forms and customs impracticable. It may be, however, that some departure from the lines of preaching inculcated by the Fathers, and neglect of the liturgical formation of the faithful have contributed towards the careless lives of many in this 'time of salvation'. The Church maintains the ancient spirit taught by the Gospels and in the writings of St Paul, according to which the disciple of Christ must live in conformity with the example of his Master, carrying the cross and practising mortification. The preacher's mission is not to create an easy Christianity, but to explain it as it really is. For the fulfilment of this obligation Lent provides a perfect opportunity.

II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

A: The Epistle: 2 Cor. 6. 1-10

1. *General argument:*

The section read today forms part of St Paul's reply to his enemies at Corinth. The quotations from Isaias prompted the choice of this passage, but the verses also outline the best possible programme of Christian activity during this season of Lent.

2. *Text:*

(a) An ineffectual welcome . . .

St Paul's whole life and work was to co-operate with the grace of God. Therefore he urges his friends not to waste these graces which they have received in abundance, especially during this period of his preaching when the prophecy of Isaias is fulfilled: I have answered thy prayer in a time of pardon: the day of salvation is here already. (Isaias 49. 8).

(b) We are careful not to give offence .. .

He renews his defence of himself and his conduct. He has always worked in such a way that no one could censure him, for that would impede the work of the grace to w'hich he refers. In this part of his defence he lets us see that his life has always been that of a minister or servant of God and his sincerity is proved, first of all by his sufferings endured during his ministry (w. 4-5), then by patience in the practice of virtues and the fulfilment of the other duties of his vocation (w. 6-7).

* *Lib. Sacramentorum,* Tome 2, p. 4, ed. Burns and Oates, 1925.

(c) we have to be pure-minded . . .

He begins to enumerate his virtues, beginning with purity because the Corinthians needed to be reminded of its importance both by his words and by his example; also because of the fact that the lack of this virtue hinders apostolic work in the soul of any man. The knowledge of St Paul is that of the Cross, not the fantastic speculations of secular philosophies, such as those of the doctors of Corinth (cf. i Cor. i. 17).

(d) forgiving, gracious ... we have to rely on unaffected love...

He had often given to his readers proof of his capacity for suffering, his affability and broad-mindedness (1 Cor. 4. 15). If he has rebuked them it has been from the motive of love and in the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 2.4). For St Paul the *sword of the Spirit* is, of course, the word of God.

(e) honoured, now slighted ...

a rapid exposition of the judgements—generally false—which were passed on his conduct.

3. *Applications:*

(a) The most appropriate to the season and to the passage from Isaias is to be found in the Magnificat antiphon: Here is the time of pardon: the day of salvation is come already. Let us act, then, in these days, as ministers of God, practising patience, fastings, watchings, and in unaffected love.

(b) The fulfilment of our duties, even under the greatest difficulties.

(c) Patience and love for others. God has brought us in contact with them to save them, not that we may receive honours and praise from them.

(d) The best way to imitate Christ is to appreciate his graces and those virtues practised by St Paul.

B: The Gospel: Matt. 4. 1-11 (Luke 4. 1-13)

1. *History and argument:*

This Gospel, together with the story of the baptism of Christ, forms the overture to the public life. After his baptism Jesus, as yet unknown to the people, retires for a period of solitude and fasting.

2. *Place:*

It appears certain that the baptism of Christ took place in the Jordan near Jericho. Not far from this spot there is a wild, barren region with a hill nearly two thousand feet above the level of the Dead Sea, indicated by tradition as the place w'here Christ was tempted by the Devil. The fast was a total one, like that of Elias.

3. *The devil's object:*

The Gospel tells us that, at the end of his fast, Christ was hungry and was tempted. What was the devil's object? This question supposes another; what did the devil know about Christ? St Augustine explains Satan's knowledge and its limitations, while Suarez gives various opinions as to what he knew. (Cf. Section III, V, 11.)

Obviously, the devil must have known something about our Lord, otherwise he would not have used such powerful weapons against him; but he may not have known that he was God. Granting the fact of that knowledge, Satan's vicious attacks on him during the Passion are understandable; but not this attempt to make him sin. The fact that he asks Christ if he is the Son of God means nothing, because the phrase admits of various interpretations. Obviously, when the Evangelists apply it to the Saviour they refer to the Divine Sonship; but in the mouth of Satan it can mean either a special providence of God watching over Christ or else the messianic status granted to a mere man. In this case the temptations make sense. The devil is trying to seduce the Messias, leading him away from the path marked out for him by the will of God. We know nothing about the actual way in which Christ was tempted.

4. *The place of the temptations:*

The first seems to have taken place on the spot where Christ fasted, abounding as it does in round, flat stones, like loaves of bread. The second took place on the pinnacle of the Temple, probably the raised gallery which separated the city from the great courtyard known as the Court of the Gentiles, an open space, usually crowded with both Jews and Gentiles, in one corner of which the Doctors of the Law taught. The mountain of the third temptation cannot be identified with any certainty.

The Text

St Mark is very brief in his account, while Matthew and Luke differ in their order of the temptations. The former is usually preferred because of the definite dismissal of Satan in the third temptation. We shall limit ourselves, in most cases, to an indication of the ideas developed by the Fathers of the Church.

i. *The desert and the fast:*

(a) And now . . .

After the baptism by John. The Christian is given the weapons with which to fight. Sanctity is not softness; the greater the holiness the greater the temptations. If we should have to suffer them then let us examine their causes, why we fail and why we succeed. There should be no discouragement and no vain confidence.

• i.e. whether the devil made use of the imagination by acting directly upon it or simply appeared in bodily form and tempted Christ by word of mouth. (Ed.)

(b) Jesus was led by the Spirit. . .

A special inspiration of the Holy Ghost. He moves all. Those who follow the leading of God's Spirit are all God's sons (Rom. 8. 14). These inspirations can be of an extraordinary nature, but in his ordinary providence the Spirit leads us by the unperceived inspirations and movements of actual grace.

(c) into the wilderness . . .

In the writings of the Fathers and other spiritual authors we find the following considerations:

i. *The spiritual advantages of solitude.* The man who is isolated from all that can distract the senses finds God more easily, because he is no lover of the world. 'Let us follow Christ who flees from pleasures. Christ is not to be found in the forum or the market place. Let us not seek him, then, where we cannot find him. Christ is not an idler in the streets. Christ is peace, and in the forum law suits abound; Christ is justice, while the forum is a place of iniquity. Christ is a worker; the forum a place of useless idleness. Christ is charity, while the forum is full of gossip. Christ is in his Church; the idols are in the forum' (St Ambrose, *De Virg.* L. 3).

ii. Absolute silence is not exempt from dangers; therefore it is not recommended except for those who are already well advanced in virtue. It usually brings with it greater temptations, but this is no cause for alarm. If the devil tries to enter it is a sure sign that he is without.

iii. With the lonely it goes hard; when he falls there is none to raise him (Eccles. 4. 10). Solitude can be a refuge for the discouraged or the proud, who seek neither counsel nor discipline. Both these states are harmful, although the former should move us to help out of charity. Quite a different solitude is that of the penitent, which is not merely good but also necessary as far as our state of life will allow. The simple examen of conscience, made several times a day, is really a kind of refuge in the desert. It is recommended by St Ignatius and to this refuge we are led by the Spirit.

(d) to be tempted...

To tempt means:

i. *To incite to sin* (Acts 5. 3; 1 Cor. 7. 1).

ii. *To try or to explore.* Done by men and devils to discover something unknown to them. God does it to manifest what he already knows and, above all, to lead those who are so tried to an understanding of it (Gen. 22. 1; Ex. 16. 4; Heb. 4. 15; 11. 17).

iii. *To provoke to anger.* Although Christ could only really have been tempted in the last two senses the devil also tried the first as well.

The purpose of temptation:

The general purposes will be explained in the notes of the Sunday within the Octave of the Nativity and the 4th Sunday after the Epiphany. The main reason for the temptations of Christ is given in the words of St Paul: It is not as if our High Priest were incapable of feeling for us in our humiliations; he has been through every trial, fashioned as we are, only sinless (Heb. 4. 15). And so he must needs become altogether like his brethren; he would be a High Priest who could feel for us and be our true representative before God, to make atonement for the sins of the people. It is because he himself has been tried by suffering, that he has power to help us in the trials we undergo (Heb. 2. 17-18).

Both texts we have just quoted explain the motives for the sufferings and the temptations of Christ; and they do not merely say that he went through them to give us an example, which would be easy. St Paul implies that, having suffered temptations, Christ becomes more capable of helping those who are tempted, because he can have compassion on them and thus extend his mercy to redeem them.

Obviously, there is a difficulty here. Did our Lord need this experimental knowledge in order to feel compassion? Certainly not. What, then, is the Apostle's meaning? Probably to extend to God our human images in order to make us understand the mind of God. We may put it this way. St Paul is concerned with giving expression to the motives which can make us have confidence in God rather than the motives for the love of Christ, who would have been equally merciful without the temptations. It is as if he were to say: Here is not a God such as you imagine, one isolated in the realms of eternity; but a High Priest who has known our miseries. This method of expression, common among us, is directed to man's heart rather than to a coldly scientific theological explanation. (Cf. St Augustine, Sect. III, V.)

(e) by the devil . . .

The task merited the personal attentions of Lucifer himself. He *does* exist, and we must be on our guard against him, taking him seriously. He cannot harm us unless we ourselves wish it.

(f) fasting . . .

Why did our Lord fast? To prepare himself for the public life; to attain the dispositions necessary to overcome temptation and to subdue his flesh, even though, in his case, this was not necessary; to atone for the sin of Adam, and to teach us to despise material pleasures in favour of those which are spiritual.

(g) Forty days and forty nights . . .

The phrase implies a total fast, such as that of Moses (Ex. 24. 18) and Elias (3 Kings 19. 8). St Augustine sees in this a picture of our

'..e λ earth, which should be one of austerity and penance. The institution of Lent is so ancient that St Jerome calls it an inheritance îrotn Christ.

x *The temptations:*

(a) at the end of them he was hungry. Then the tempter approached.

Hunger is a poor counsellor and the devil knows how to take advantage of it. Are we surprised that he should take advantage of the hunger of the poor when he knew so well how to make use of that of Christ? Or are we surprised at the falls of the needy?

(b) If thou art the Son of God . ..

What was his idea? To find out if Christ were the Son of God or to sow doubts in our Lord's mind? To get him to work useless miracles or to use his power to his own advantage? This seems the most likely, without excluding altogether the other motives.

(c) bid these stones turn into loaves of bread . . .

In biblical idiom *bid* implies the use of one's own personal authority in categorical command (cf. Gen. i. 3). It is necessary to distinguish here between what is asked and the motives for the petition. What the devil asks for is an unnecessary, or at least a badly orientated miracle, since it is not the will of God the Father. Perhaps the motives are to try the virtue of a son of God and, above all, the motive of hunger. The sin, therefore, would have been one of disobedience, together with an abuse of divine power, occasioned by gluttony, since this latter consists in trying to satisfy a need by means which are out of all proportion. Although the sin would have been grave the devil well knew how to disguise his intentions. The need was a real one; what was asked was merely bread, the food of the poor.

(d) He answered: It is written, Man cannot live by bread alone . . .

Christ had only one pattern for his life—the will of God the Father, and he will not advance his *hour* or work miracles outside that pattern. If he were ever to do so it would not be at the request of Satan, but because of Mary's petition at Cana. He knew then that the first to accede to that request would be the Father himself.

On giving his answer to the tempter Christ repeats a phrase from Deuteronomy: Training thee to keep the commands of the Lord thy God, and follow the path he chooses, and live in fear of him (Dt. 8. 6). The first meaning of his reply is that bread is not indispensable, since God has a thousand ways at his disposal for feeding a man in need. However, we need not reject the traditional meaning; namely, that the Christian's principal food is the word of God.

Like all the Jews, Christ used the appropriated sense *of* Scripture frequently and was a past-master at the art of not replying directly to a question (cf. Matt. 22. 21).

3. *The second temptation:*

(a) cast thyself down to earth . . .

The motive is now vanity. If you really are the Son of God begin by manifesting yourself gloriously in order to attract people's attention. The phrase is from Psalm 90. 11-12: He has given charge to his angels concerning thee, to watch over thee wheresoever thou gocst; they will hold thee up with their hands lest thou shouldst chance to trip on a stone.

These words, like the psalm from which they are taken, do not refer to the Alessias, but to the just man, and their interpretation must be metaphorical. There is no question here of saving the rash man, but of protecting the just man in the path of virtue. Since, however, it is possible to obtain spiritual advantage from words used, even by the devil, many authors use this phrase to preach on the guardian angels. Oh, marvellous condescension! Oh, truly divine affection of charity! For who is he that hath given charge? And to whom hath the charge been given ? And concerning whom ? . .. With how much reverence, with how much gratitude and confidence should these words inspire you. Reverence for his presence, gratitude for his benevolence, confidence in his safe keeping! Walk, therefore, with caution, remembering that the angels of God accompany you in all your ways, as the Lord hath commanded them. In every place, whether public or private, show respect for your angel. Surely you would not dare to do in his presence what you would be afraid to do in mine ?... and as often as you feel the pressure of violent temptation; as often as bitter tribulation threatens to engulf you, invoke your guardian, call upon your guide, and say: "Lord, save me; I perish." He neither slumbers nor sleeps, although sometimes he hides himself from you for a time' (St Bernard, Serm. 12 on Ps. 90).

(b) it is further written . . .

Christ uses the words of Deuteronomy 1. 16: 'Thou shalt not put the Lord thy God to the proof.' In this case the temptation implies putting oneself in grave danger voluntarily, confident that God will save us. If this were done to prove God's power it would be an even graver sin. The practical applications are easily seen; rejection of all vanity, obedience to God's plans and prudence in facing danger.

4. *The third temptation:*

(a) Once more the devil took him . . .

The devil has recourse to the greatest of all temptations, from

which few escape, that of power or dominion over others; that of seeing others on their knees before us. He asks nothing less than adoration in return. It is his last card.

(b) he showed him all the kingdoms of the world . . .

Perhaps in imagination or by pointing out the direction in which they lay.

(c) I will give thee all these... (St Luke adds, They have been made over to me and I may give them to whomsoever I please.)

At the end of his life our Lord will say: All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me (Matt. 28. 18). Here the devil arrogates to himself this power. Is he lying? Partly. Our Lord provides us with the answer when he says that his kingdom is not of this world. The Lord of all things does not promise material kingdoms as the devil does. In a way Satan is the prince of this world because he rules over the vices which overcome us at times.

(d) if thou wilt fall down and worship me . . .

The devil sinned and fell through pride and since then his one desire is to receive homage.

(e) Away with thee, Satan ...

Jesus unmasks the devil and, annoyed by the last and greatest attempt so injurious to the Father's name and honours, he dismisses him with yet another quotation from Deuteronomy (6. 13) which says: Fear the Lord thy God. It is the great precept of monotheism, and the words 'to him only shalt thou do sendee' fit perfectly into the formula, even though they may not form part of the Sacred Text.

4. *The victory:*

Then the devil left him alone and thereupon angels came and ministered to him.

He left our Lord for the time being, until his hour should come, as St Luke says (4. 13). Nevertheless, Satan did not give up all his attempts to annoy our Lord by inducing the people to proclaim him a material king or to ask of him useless miracles. Still, all commentators agree that he found his real hour in the Garden and during the Passion.

SECTION III. THE FATHERS

I. ST ATHANASIUS

In his life of St Anthony Abbot, written about 357, St Athanasius comments on the holy monk's temptations. The predominant thought is that these attacks of the devil are not to be feared,

because we can overcome them with the grace of Christ. They may be known by the uneasiness they cause in the soul.

The Lord, without having forgotten Anthony in his struggles, came at last to his help. The saint lifted up his eyes and saw the roof open and a ray of light descend. The devils fled, his wounds were healed and the house seemed wholesome again. Anthony, having noticed the comfort he felt in the easing of the pain of his wounds, addressed his invisible helper thus: 'Where were you? Why did you not come before to calm my sufferings?' A voice replied: T was here, Anthony, watching over your struggle' (PG. 26. 860a).

All our efforts should be directed towards not abandoning the work already begun, without tiring from our labours and without saying: T have now given enough time to the ascetical life.' On the contrary, let us increase our efforts as though we had begun at this very moment. . . .

Man's life on earth is extremely short compared to the life to come. ... If we give ourselves to the ascetical life for eighty or a hundred years he will not reward us with as many again, but with all eternity. We fight on earth; we receive the inheritance of heaven *(ibid.* 868a).

When we look at the world let us not think that we have given up anything. The whole of it is worth nothing compared to heaven. . . . why then desire such small and petty goods? *(ibid.* 868c).

In order not to fall into tepidity it is useful to meditate on the words of the Apostle: . . . death is daily at my side (1 Cor. 15. 31). If we lived as if we were to die this day we would never sin. We must realize this and, in the morning on rising, think that we may never see the evening; on going to our rest, that we may not rise from it. Our life is uncertain and measured by divine providence. In this way we shall not sin and shall despise the temptations of the flesh and riches *(ibid.* 872a).

After explaining the devil's fall and his efforts against Christians, St Athanasius affirms that Satan redoubles his attacks against all those who try to follow the path of virtue and applies the same methods that he used against St Anthony. His first attack is through thoughts and carnal temptations; then, disguising himself as an angel of light if necessary, he tries to get us to pray when it is not convenient, to keep vigils when we should not do so, in order to lead us to tire and to despair *(ibid.* 876 if.).

The signs of the evil spirits are noise, disturbances, troubled thoughts, sadness, weariness in ascetical practices, abandonment, fear of death, desires for evil things and disorder in our habits. If, on the contrary, you feel happy, full of confidence, tranquil and strong, then be confident and pray. It is a sign of the love of God *(ibid.* 896a).

On one occasion the devil appeared to St Anthony at the door of his monastery' and, when the saint asked him what he was doing there, he replied: 'Why do the monks and the Christians accuse me falsely? Why do they hate me so much?' The saint answered by asking Satan why he, in his turn, annoyed them so, to which the devil replied: 'I do not annoy them, because I am no longer capable of doing anything. Have you not read: the swords of the enemy have lost their edge for ever? (Ps. 9. v. 7). ... I have nowhere to go, either in the country' or the towns; everywhere there are monks and Christians. Remember that, and do not belittle your own power' *(ibid.* 904a).

II. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

The passages are taken from his Homily on the Gospel of St Matthew, Hom. 13. PG. 30, 207 if.

Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert precisely when the same Spirit had descended upon him in visible form at his baptism, so that none of the baptized should be surprised if, after receiving this sacrament, their temptations are greater. . . . Suffer them in a generous spirit and as the most natural thing in the world. You have received weapons with which to fight, not to look on with folded arms. . ..

God does not impede temptations, first, so that you may be convinced of your strength; secondly, that you may be humble, not proud; thirdly, that the devil, who may doubt whether you have really abandoned him, will be certain of that fact; fourthly, so that you may become as strong as iron, understanding the value of the treasures which have been granted to you . . .

Why then does our Lord say to us: Pray that you enter not into temptation? (Matt. 26. 41). Simply because Christ did not go spontaneously into the desert, but was guided thither by providence. In this he gives us to understand that we must not launch ourselves into the midst of temptations and that, once we are tempted, we should persevere with constancy and generosity.

Christ submitted to temptation just as gladiators, who wish to train their disciples, go into the arena. The devil was puzzled, since he did not know if Christ was the Son of God. On the one hand he had heard the divine testimony at his baptism but, on the other hand, he saw him as a man. So he approaches, using ambiguous language, as he did with Eve. In both cases he employs lies in order to discover the truth. Instead of saying 'if you are hungry', which would have been the natural thing to say, he allows it to be seen that he does not underestimate Christ, whose greatness he recognizes in part, but instead he pretends to flatter his vanity: 'if you are the Son of God'.

What is Christ's attitude? He confesses his weakness as man, 'man cannot live by bread alone'; and affirms before all else, the natural necessity. Satan docs not forget his tricks. He began his temptations in Paradise through gluttony and he repeats that ruse here. Fools assure us that all the world's evils come through the stomach, but Christ teaches us that not even such a necessity should force us to do evil.

Fie also teaches us that it is impossible to ally ourselves with Satan, even when he asks us for indifferent or even good things. Did he not command him to be silent when he confessed him? (Luke 4. 35). Did not St Paul do the same? (Acts 16. 18). His last lesson, repeated later before the Jews, is that of not having recourse to unnecessary miracles. Let us do nothing vainly and without cause.

Christ's reply teaches us that it is best to overcome the devil, not by miracles, but with patience in a spirit of long-suffering, without ever allowing him to lead us away through vain-glory or ostentation.

St. Luke affirms (4. 13) that the temptations were complete because, in truth, these three, gluttony, vain-glory and ambition, are the main ones. The devil, in presenting them, goes from the lesser to the greater, as he usually does. And how should temptation be overcome? As Christ taught us. By seeking God in such a way that hunger cannot lower us, because we believe in him who, by his word, can supply our needs; nor do we tempt God in those good things which he has given us nor seek material things, being content with the glory of heaven and despising whatever is not required to supply our necessities... . There is nothing which can hand us over so completely to the power of Satan as avarice. Even in our day it happens that some, by nature men, but really instruments of Satan, say to us 'all these will I give if you will fall down and adore me'.

What is the final lesson? Not to pay any attention at all to the devil; close our ears completely and loathe him when he praises us.

Fie has declared war against us without quarter and is more anxious to see us lost than we are about our eternal salvation . . . sometimes he uses words of sympathy and compassion, but we should pay no heed to him, because if the Lord chastises us, it is because he loves us. Therefore, if we see ourselves surrounded by happiness but in a state of sin, let us be truly afflicted, because we should always be sorry for our sins, but much more when we do not suffer anything. Suffering cleanses us and is God's grace to us. It is a terrible thing to lead a bad life and a peaceful one, because the punishment will overtake us in the end.

The final paragraphs of his Homily begin with these words: 'But you may say: Who has ever come from hell to tell us these

things?' He then goes on to explain the certainty of our faith in these divine truths, the necessity of reward and punishment in the next life and then insists: if no one has come from hell, at least Christ came down from heaven to teach us. The important thing is to take nonce of his doctrines.

m. ST BASIL

Soldiers and athletes strengthen their bodies in order to fight. We weaken ours (by fasting) in order to gain the victory'. What massage with oil does for the body and muscles, fasting does for the soul.... Fast, and do so with joy.

Through lack of mortification we were expelled from Paradise; let us fast, then, that its gates may once more be opened to us. Moses, before going up the mountain, prepared himself by means of a long fast (Ex. 24. 18), and there, while he continued without food, God wrote the ten commandments on tablets of stone. But what happened meanwhile at the foot of the mountain? The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play and through that food and pleasure they fell into idolatry'.

Do not seek pretexts to excuse yourself, because you are talking to God, who knows all things. You cannot fast, yet you treat yourself to enormous meals? These are far more harmful to the body than fasting ... to judge by the lives of many it would seem easier to run about than to rest, to fight than to live at peace, since they prefer illness to a salutary moderation.

If we think of the spiritual life, it is fasting which gives the wings to prayer that it may rise to heaven; it is the solidifying element in family life, the health of the mother and the teacher of the children. . . . Fasting not merely frees you from future condemnation; it also preserves you from many evils and brings the flesh, otherwise untamable, into subjection.

Can we attribute to the devil even' sin of thought, word and deed? In general I believe that Satan cannot oblige anyone to sin; but, using the inclinations of each one and his forbidden desires, he manages to drag those who are living carelessly towards those vices to which they are inclined. He uses as his helpers natural inclinations, as happened in the case of Christ. On seeing him hungry the tempter approached him saying. ... In the case of Judas he made use of evil desires, because, detecting his inclination to avarice, he moved him to sell the Saviour for thirty pieces of silver.... It is clear that, on many occasions, evil comes from ourselves, and Christ bears witness to this fact when he says that evil thoughts come from the mind (from the *Regulae breviores).*

• The main ideas here expressed are taken from two homilies, *ad populum variis argumentis,* Hom. XIX and Hom. I and II *de ieiunio.* (Ed.)

Only with great difficulty will he who never resigns himself to take the lowest place or be considered the least of all, be able to resist temptations to anger or suffer mortifications patiently. On the other hand, the humble man who, when he secs himself despised, confesses that he is worth even less, will not easily be troubled and if, some day, people accuse him and call him poor, he will know that he really is in that state, because he needs everything and cannot even live without the daily help of God.

It is equally difficult not to be cast down by misfortune and not to be proud in times of prosperity (Hom 7. *in Comm.* Ps. 61).

If at any time you should see your brother fall into sin do not let your thoughts dwell on that fact; examine carefully all the good he has done and you will certainly discover that he is better than you are. People should be judged, not by one detail, but by the whole of their lives, as God judges them. ... Do not consider yourself superior to any man, because it may well be that, although you have absolved yourself, you may be punished by yet another and by a just sentence from heaven. If you consider that you have done good, then give thanks to God, but do not think yourself superior to any man. Do not let that fate overcome you which fell upon the devil, who wished to be superior to man, and God cast him down in such a way that now we may tread him under foot (Hom. 17 *de Humil.*).

IV. ST AMBROSE

(There are extant fifteen sermons of St Ambrose on Lent. The main ones, from which these ideas are taken, can be found: PL. 17, 676-678; *ibid.* 705-707.)

Fasting is a great remedy for evils and a source of great rewards, but not to fast in Lent is a sin. He who fasts at other times will receive pardon, but he who does not fast during Lent will be punished.

Anyone who cannot fast should be more charitable towards the poor in an attempt to do penance for past sin. It is even better to give alms, my brethren, even though it is a good thing to fast. However, if it be possible to practise both together they are two magnificent acts of virtue. He who cannot fast but who can give alms let him know that his almsdeeds are sufficient without fasting.

The Lord, through the mouth of the prophet Isaias, praises and counsels the practice of almsgiving in such terms that no one, however poor, can consider himself excused from it (Isaias 58. 6-7).

It annoys us to receive Christ into our homes in the person of the poor, and I am afraid that he will do the same with us in heaven and will not receive us into his glory. We despise him on earth and I fear that he, in turn, will despise us in heaven, according to his

words, ‘ I was hungry and you never gave me food . . (Matt. 25. 42). Let us pay attention to these words, my brethren; let us not hear them with indifference or merely with the ears of the body but, listening to them with fidelity, let us so carry them out that others also may hear and do them through our word and example.

There is still time for me and for others like myself who have been lazy, to mend our ways, with God's help. We can give generously for our past sins those alms which we have either not given until now or have given in a miserly way.... Fasting without alms-deeds is like a lamp without oil.

The hand of the poor man is the treasure of Christ. Therefore help those who are in need, that what they receive from you on earth may not remain here but may be carried up into heaven. The food which the poor receive from you is consumed, but the reward for such a good deed is stored up in heaven. ... I know' that many of you do give alms frequendy to the poor and to the traveller; therefore what I have said must serve to increase your zeal and, as far as he is concerned who has not yet given alms, let him accustom himself to a work which is so meritorious and so pleasing to God.

Taking my inspiration from God himself, I have always advised that, as these feasts approach, you should draw near to the altar of God clothed in the fight of purity·, resplendent with alms-deeds, adorned with prayers as with so many precious spiritual jewels; at peace, not only with your friends, but also with your enemies. In a word, that you should approach the altar with a clean conscience, that you may receive the Body and Blood of Christ, not for your condemnation, but as a remedy.... He who helps the needy in the way in which he would like to be helped himself, were he in need, has fulfilled the precepts of both the Old Law' and the New' and has observed the command of the Gospel (Matt. 7. 12).

V. ST AUGUSTINE

(The following is a selection of St. Augustine's thoughts on Lent, taken from various works.)

Christ was tempted by the devil and in the person of Christ, you also were tempted, because Christ took your flesh and gave you salvation; he took on your mortality and gave you life; from you he received insults and returned you honours; now he takes your temptations to give you the victory. If we were tempted in him we also won the victory' together with him. Do you consider how Christ was tempted without thinking of the triumph? See yourself tempted in him and know' yourself as the conqueror in him. He could have prevented the devil from approaching him, but without being tempted he would not have taught you the lesson of victon'. . . .

He is not overcome because he is founded on rock. The Church is also founded on a rock, which resists all the attacks of the winds and the seas as Christ resisted the devil. Let us cry out then, and our voice will be heard because we are founded on a rock.

He guides us himself as the Way and leads us to himself as to our homeland. Why? Because he is our hope. And how is he our hope? You have just heard the answer, because he was tempted, suffered, died and rose again. When we read all these things we say: God will not allow us to be lost since his Son was tempted, died and rose again for our sakes. God will not despise us for whom he did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us. If then Christ has made himself our hope we should see in him our labour and our reward; labour in his Passion, reward in his resurrection. We have, therefore, two lives, one here and another which we hope for. The former is known to us, the latter is not. Endure all things you may have to suffer now and you will attain that which at present we have not. How are you to endure? By not being overcome by the tempter. Christ, in his deeds, his temptations, his Passion and death, shows you the life which you have to live here. By his resurrection he teaches you the life towards which you are travelling.

Christ is the tower, the castle of defence against the enemy, because he is the rock on which the Church has been built. Are you afraid of being wounded by the devil? Take refuge in the tower, where Satan's arrows will never reach you. There you will be defended and safe. But how are you to seek refuge in the tower? Not bodily; do not tire yourself by seeking safety in that way. Remember Christ and enter in to him. And how are you to remember him in this way? By thinking, when you have to suffer anything, that he suffered first, and by reminding yourself that he suffered to die and then to rise again. Remember that the same end awaits you and you are within the tower. . . . Thence you can hurl your arrows against the enemy to wound and to overcome him. What arrows? The word of God, your faith, your hope and your good works.

And you—are you rich or poor? Many reply, poor, and they speak the truth. But I know rich men who, though they have something, are yet in need. Yes, they have a great deal of silver and gold, but would that they might realize how poor they are!... However much you may possess, you who are rich, you are beggars before God. Come with me to pray and I shall prove it to you. There you are petitioning. You are not poor, yet you beg? What is more, you ask for bread, for do you not say 'give us this day our daily bread'? If you ask for your daily bread what are you, rich or poor? Listen, then to Christ, who says to you: Give me of that which I gave you. What did you bring with you when you came into the world? Creature as you are, you found all that I had created. You

brought nothing ith you and you will not take anything hence. You are full of this world's goods, while the poor man has nothing. Both of you were born naked; yes, you also were born naked, but you have found many things. I ask of you that which is mine; give and I shall return it to you. 1 have been your creditor; make me now your debtor (Serm. 123. 2. 4. 5, PL. 38, 685).

Why, then, did he not do it (convert the stones into bread at the request of the devil)? That you might learn how to reply to the tempter and if, at any time, in the midst of your difficulties, you should see him approach and suggest to you: If you are a Christian and belong to Christ, why does he abandon you? Should he not come to your aid? You will know how to reply: The doctor also cuts and appears to hurt his patient, but he does no harm.

A nature which can suffer and so reach happiness is more noble than one which can neither suffer nor be happy.

Thus, the true cause of the blessedness of the good angels consists in this, that they cleave to him who supremely IS. And if we ask the cause of the misery' of the bad we find that they are unhappy because they have forsaken him who is the Supreme Being and have turned to themselves, who are not supreme beings. This vice, what else is it but pride?

The devils themselves have knowledge without charity and are thereby so inflated and proud that they crave those divine honours and the services of religion which they know] to be due to the true God; yet, as far as they can, they exact these things from all those over whom they have any dominion. Against this pride of the devils, under whose sway the human race was held subject as a merited punishment, there was pitted the mighty influence of the humility of God, who appeared in the form of a servant; but men, resembling the devil in his pride, but not in his knowledge, refused to recognize him.

He made himself known to the demons, not by that which is light eternal (that light which illuminates the pious, whose souls are cleansed by the faith that is from him), but by some temporal effects of his power and evidence of his mysterious presence. . . . But when he judged it advisable gradually to suppress these signs, the prince of darkness doubted whether he was the Christ and attempted to discover this by tempting him, in so far as he permitted himself to be tempted, that he might adapt the manhood he had assumed to be an example to us.

VI. ST BERNARD

My brethren, although we are but little ones and although there is a long road, beset by dangers, ahead of us, why should we be afraid who are under the protection of such powerful guardians?

(the angels). They who keep us in all our ways cannot be overcome by any hostile force; they can neither be led astray themselves nor lead us astray. They are faithful, prudent and invincible; why, then, should we fear? Only let us follow them, cling to them, and we shall dwell in the aid of the Most High and abide under the protection of the God of heaven (Serm. 12 on Ps. 90).

SECTION IV. THEOLOGIANS

I. ST THOMAS AQUINAS

A: Fasting

1. *Its purpose:*

Fasting is practised for a three-fold purpose; first in order to bridle the lusts of the flesh; wherefore the Apostle says: In fasting, in chastity, since fasting is the guardian of chastity. For according to Jerome, Venus is cold when Ceres and Bacchus are not there, that is to say, lust is cooled by abstinence in meat and drink. Secondly, we have recourse to fasting in order that the mind may rise more freely to the contemplation of heavenly things; hence it is related (Dan. 10) of Daniel that he received a revelation from God after fasting for three weeks. Thirdly in order to satisfy for sins; wherefore it is written (Joel 2. 12) be converted to me with all your heart in fasting and in weeping and in mourning. The same is declared by Augustine in a sermon *(De Orat. et Jejun.}*. Fasting cleanses the soul, raises the mind, subjects one's flesh to the spirit, renders the heart contrite and humble, scatters the clouds of concupiscence, quenches the fire of lust, kindles the true light of chastity (2-2. q. 147. a.Lc.).

. . . The fasts that are of obligation are appointed by the councils of Bishops and are sanctioned by the custom of the universal Church. Nor are they opposed to the freedom of the faithful, rather are they of use in hindering the slavery of sin, -which is opposed to spiritual freedom, of which it is written: You, brethren, have been called unto liberty; only make not liberty an occasion to the flesh (Gal. 3. 13).

2. *Its necessity:*

Now it has been stated above that fasting is useful as atoning for and preventing sin, and as raising the mind to spiritual things. And everyone is bound by the natural dictates of reason to practise fasting as far as it is necessary for these purposes. Wherefore fasting in general is a matter of precept of the natural law, while the fixing of the time and manner of fasting as becoming and profitable to the Christian people is a matter of precept of positive law established by ecclesiastical authority: the latter is the Church fast, the former is the fast prescribed by nature (2-2. q. 147. a. 3. c).

. . . Considered absolutely it is not binding under precept, but it is binding under precept to each one that stands in need of such a remedy. And since men, for the most part, need this remedy both because in many things we all offend (James 3. 2), and because the flesh lusteth against the spirit (Gal. 5. 17), it was fitting that the Church should appoint certain fasts to be kept by all in common. In doing this the Church does not make a precept of a matter of supererogation, but particularized in detail that which is of general obligation *(ibid. ad ium.)*.

B: Temptation

I. *The temptations of Christ:*

After giving as his opinion, supported by St Augustine and Hilary, that the devil did not know that Christ was the Son of God, St Thomas affirms that Christ wished to be tempted for several reasons:

First, to help us in our own temptations: Christ wished to be tempted, first that he might strengthen us against temptations. Hence Gregors' says in a homily: It was not unworthy of our Redeemer to wish to be tempted, who came also to be slain; in order that by his temptations he might conquer our temptations, just as by his death he overcame our death.

Secondly, that we might be warned, so that none, however holy, may think himself safe or free from temptation. Wherefore also he wished to be tempted after his baptism, because as Hilary says: The temptations of the devil assail those principally who are sanctified, for he desires, above all, to overcome the holy . . .

Thirdly, in order to give us an example: to teach us, to wit, how to overcome the temptations of the devil. Hence Augustine says Christ allowed himself to be tempted by the devil that he might be our Mediator in overcoming temptations, not only by helping us, but also by giving us an example.

Fourthly, in order to fill us with confidence in his mercy. Hence, it is written (Heb. 4. 15): We have not a high priest who cannot have compassion on our infirmities, but one tempted in all things like as we are, without sin.

2. *Mode and order of Christ's temptations:*

At first he tempted him to that which men desire, however spiritual they may be, namely, the support of the corporeal nature by food. Secondly he advanced to that matter in which spiritual men are sometimes found wanting, inasmuch as they do certain things for show, which pertains to vainglory. Thirdly he led the temptation on to that in which no spiritual men, but only carnal men, have a part—namely, to desire wordly riches and fame, to the extent of holding God in contempt.

In like manner the devil in the preceding temptations tried to lead Christ from the desire of one sin to the commission of another; thus from the desire of food he tried to lead him to the vanity of the needless working of a miracle; and from the desire of glory to tempt God by casting himself headlong (3. q. 41. a. 4. c and *ad*

3. *The matter of the temptations:*

(a) Gluttony:

To make use of what is needful for self-support is not the sin of gluttony; but if a man does anything inordinate out of the desire for such support it can pertain to the sin of gluttony. Now it is inordinate for a man who has human assistance at his command to seek to obtain food miraculously for mere bodily support. Hence the Lord miraculously provided the children of Israel with manna in the desert, where there was no means of obtaining food otherwise. . . . But in order to assuage his hunger he could have done otherwise than work a miracle, as did John the Baptist, according to Matthew (3. 4); or he could have hastened to the neighbouring country. Consequently the devil esteemed that if Christ was a mere man, he would fall into sin by attempting to assuage his hunger by a miracle *{ibid. ad mm).*

(b) Vainglory:

It often happens that a man seeks to derive glory from external humiliation, whereby he is exalted by reason of spiritual good. Hence Augustine says: It must be noted that it is possible to boast not only of the beauty and splendour of material things, but even of filthy squalor. And this is signified by the devil urging Christ to seek spiritual glory by casting his body down *{ibid, ad 211m).*

(c) Ambition:

It is a sin to desire worldly riches and honours in an inordinate fashion. And the principal sign of this is when a man does something wrong in order to acquire such things. And so the devil was not satisfied with instigating a desire for riches and honours, but he went so far as to tempt Christ, for the sake of gaining possession of those things, to fall down and adore him, which is a very great crime and against God. Nor does he say merely, If thou wilt adore me, but he adds, If falling down, because, as Ambrose says on Luke 4. 5: Ambition harbours yet another danger within itself: for while seeking to rule, it will serve: it will bow in submission that it may be crowned with honour; and the higher it aims the lower it abases itself.

(d) All temptations:

As Ambrose says on Luke 4. 13: Scripture would not have said that 'All the temptations being ended the devil departed from him' unless the matter of all sins were included in the three temptations already related. For the causes of temptations are the causes of desires—namely, lust of the flesh, hope of glory, eagerness for power.

4. *Tempting God:*

(a) Its meaning:

Properly speaking, to tempt is to test the person tempted. Now we put a person to the test by words or by deeds. By words, that we may find out whether he knows what we ask, or whether he can and will grant it; by deeds, when, by what we do, we probe another's prudence, will or power. . . . Accordingly, man tempts God sometimes by words, sometimes by deeds. Now we speak with God in words when we pray. Hence a man tempts God explicitly in his prayers when he asks something of God with the intention of probing God's knowledge, power or will. He tempts God explicitly by deeds when he intends, by whatever he does, to experiment on God's power, good will or wisdom. But he will tempt God implicitly if, though he does not intend to make an experiment on God, yet he asks for or does something which has no other use than to prove God's power, goodness or knowledge. When a man in his prayers entrusts himself to the divine assistance for some urgent or useful motive, this is not to tempt God: for it is written (2 Par. 20. 12): As we know' not what to do we can only turn our eyes to thee (2-2. q. 97. a. I. c).

(b) Tempting God in prayer:

He that does not prepare his soul before prayer by forgiving those against whom he has anything, or in some other way disposing himself to devotion, does not do what he can to be heard by God, wherefore he tempts God implicitly as it were. And though this implicit temptation would seem to arise from presumption or indiscretion, yet the very fact that a man behaves presumptuously and without due care in matters relating to God implies irreverence towards him. For it is written (1 Pet. 5. 6): Be you humbled . . . under the mighty hand of God (2-2. q. 97. a. 3. *ad 2um*).

(c) The theology of temptation:

i. *It is not a sin.* Temptation, as importing provocation to evil, is always an evil or fault in the tempter; but in the one tempted it is not properly speaking a fault; unless through the temptation some change is wrought in the one who is tempted; for thus is the action of the agent in the patient. And if the tempted is changed to evil by the tempter he falls into fault (1. q. 48. a. 5. *ad yum*).

ii. *Man must avoid the occasions of temptation.* The occasions of temptation are twofold. One is on the part of man—for instance, when a man causes himself to be near to sin by not avoiding the occasions of sinning. And such occasions of temptation should be avoided, as it is written of Lot (Gen. 19. 17): Neither stay thou in all the country about Sodom.

Another occasion of temptation is on the part of the devil, who always envies those who strive for better things, as Ambrose says. And such occasions of temptation are not to be avoided. Hence Chrysostom says (in Hom. v. *in Matt.):* Not only Christ was led into the desert by the Spirit, but all God's children that have the Holy Ghost. For it is not enough for them to sit idle; the Holy Ghost urges them to do something great; which is for them to be in the desert from the devil's standpoint, for no unrighteousness, in which the devil delights, is there. Again, every good work, compared to the flesh and the world, is the desert; because it is not according to the will of the flesh and of the world. Now, there is no danger in giving the devil such an occasion of temptation; since the help of the Holy Ghost, who is the author of the perfect deed, is more powerful than the assaults of the envious devil (3. q. 41. a. 2. *ad 11m).*

iii. *The causes of temptation.* To tempt is, properly speaking, to make trial of something. Now we make trial of something in order to know something about it: hence the immediate end of every tempter is knowledge. . . . From this we can gather how various beings are said to tempt in various ways. For man is said to tempt, sometimes indeed merely for the sake of knowing something; and for this reason it is a sin to tempt God . . . sometimes too he tempts in order to help, sometimes in order to hurt. The devil, howeyer, always tempts in order to hurt by urging man into sin. In this sense it is said to be his proper office to tempt; for though at times man tempts thus, he does this as minister of the devil. God is said to tempt that he may know, in the same sense as that is said to know which makes others to know. Hence it is written (Dt. 13. 3): The Lord your God trieth you, that it may appear whether you love him.

The flesh and the world are said to tempt as the instruments or matter of temptations; inasmuch as one can know what sort of man someone is, according as he follows or resists the desires of the flesh, and according as he despises worldly advantages and adversity; of which things the devil also makes use in tempting (1. q. 114. a. 2. c).

iv. *The devil's methods.* The temptation which comes from the enemy takes the form of a suggestion, as Gregory says (Hom. 16. *in Evang.).* Now a suggestion cannot be made to everybody in the same way; it must arise from those things towards which each

one has an inclination. Consequently, the devil does not straight away tempt the spiritual man to grave sins, but he begins with lighter sins, so as to lead him gradually to those of greater magnitude. Thus too did the devil set about the temptation of the first man. For at first he enticed his mind to consent to the eating of the forbidden fruit, saying (Gen. 3.1): Why hath God commanded you that you should not eat of every tree of paradise? Secondly, to vainglory by saying: Your eyes shall be opened. Thirdly, he led the temptation to the extreme height of pride, saying: You shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil. This same order did he observe in tempting Christ... and Christ resisted these temptations by quoting the authority' of the Law, not by enforcing his power, so as to give more honour to his human nature and a greater punishment to his adversary', since the foe of the human race was vanquished not as by God but as by man; as Pope Leo says (Serm. 1. *De Quadr.* 3). (3. q. 42. a. 4. c.)

IL FRANCISCO SUAREZ

i. Christ was led into the desert under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to live there an angelic, rather than a human existence giving his time to contemplation in which solitude is a great help. He did this to give us an example. Although his mind and will were always in a state of perfect contemplation of the beatific vision he could still increase his human attention and concentration on divine things by withdrawing himself from material things which could distract him. His example is useful, not merely for those who live a retired life, but also for those who live an active life. They, too, should isolate themselves occasionally, and dedicate themselves to God, especially if they have the office and duty of teaching others.

2. The fact that he went into the desert to be tempted admits of many explanations. We can attribute it to the Holy Ghost, who allowed him to be tempted, or perhaps Christ himself chose this battle field deliberately. This does not mean that we should seek out danger, because we cannot be certain of success, as he was; but at times we may put ourselves in the way of it in order to attain some greater good, as for example, in the case of those who dedicate themselves to perfection, even though they know that they will have to face greater temptations.

3. *Christ fasted to give us an example:*

(a) So that no one may think that, by adopting a contemplative life, he can avoid all dangers and so docs not need to mortify the flesh (St Cyprian).

• From *Mysteries of the Life of Christ,* Dispute 29, Section 1.

(b) To be more prepared to fight against the devil (St Basil, Hom. 1).

(c) To recommend the law of fasting to us; 'He laid down the Law of fisting without sadness. . . . Why should it be thought peculiar that the evil spirit should be cast out of the soul by the same means through the use of which the good spirit enters into it?' (Tertullian).

(d) To teach us that fasting is the wings which lift our prayer to heaven (St John Chrysostom).

4. The first temptation was to gluttony, not in the matter or quantity, but in the disordered way in which the remedy for Christ's hunger was to be achieved. There was also an element of vanity in it, since the devil asked for a miracle which did not pertain to the glory of God or supply a real need, but was merely ostentation.

The same elements can be found also in the second temptation, where we see vanity and ambition. The main object of the temptation is vanity and pride, but under different aspects. In the last temptation there is also idolatory motivated by pride and ambition, together with avarice. In short, the first temptation was directed towards something not bad in itself, but only to be attained by an evil or at least a disordered means; the second sought something not grievous ly wrong—the appreciation of men—but by a means which was even more out of proportion than the former one. The third temptation unmasks the tempter completely, because he sought to lead Christ to commit the gravest of all sins against God from a feeble motive, but one which is usually at the root of all vice.

5. *The great lesson—victory over temptation:*

Christ taught us to resist the attacks of the devil:

(a) by the use of the word of God and the Sacred Scriptures;

(b) by remembering God's commandments;

(c) by trusting in God's promises;

(d) by knowing intimately the snares the enemy sets for us and by not co-operating with him, but rejecting him, with confidence in God and also, should it be necessary, with authority;

(e) by humility.

The dialogue between them suggests, that, in order to tempt Christ, Satan took human form. He could only tempt Christ by words, as in the case of Adam; and it does not seem fitting that he should be able to work on the imagination or on the interior senses of our Lord.

SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. ST TERESA OF AVILA*

1. After indicating that it is a sign of perfection not to fear open temptation or trials, the saint continues: These whom they fear and rightly so, and from whom they beg the Lord to deliver them are treacherous enemies, devils who transform themselves into angels of light. The soul fails to recognize them until they have done it a great deal of harm; they seek our life's blood, putting an end to our virtues, and we go on yielding to temptation, often without knowing It.

2. *The two main deceptions of the devil:*

(a) to pretend that consolations come from God, a thing which is often more beneficial than harmful: Do not suppose that the sole danger lies in their making us believe that the consolations and favours which they can counterfeit in us come from God. This, in a way, is the least harm they can do us; it may even help some whom this sensible consolation leads to spend more time in prayer...

(b) Making us believe that we possess virtues which, in fact, do not exist in us: Where the devil can do great harm without our realizing it is in making us believe that we possess virtues which we do not. This is pestilential. ... On the one hand our humility is weakened, while on the other, we neglect to cultivate that virtue, believing that we have already acquired it.

3. *Some special deceits of the devil:*

(a) Making us believe that virtue exists from the mere desire to possess it: The devil makes us believe that we have some virtue—patience, let us say—because we have determination and make continual resolutions to suffer a great deal for God's sake. ... I advise you to place no reliance on these virtues: we ought not to think that we know anything about them beyond their names, or to imagine that the Lord has given them to us until we come to the test. For it may be that, at the first annoying word that people say to you, your patience will fall to the ground.

(b) False humility for our sins: Beware also of certain kinds of false humility which the devil inculcates in us and which make us very uneasy about the gravity of our past sins. . . . The thing can get to such a pass that the soul can be led to believe that through being what it is, it has been forsaken by God, and thus it almost doubts His mercy . . .

* From *The Way of Perfection,* Chs. 38-40, ar} examination of the text, 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Pay great attention to this point, because sometimes thinking yourselves so wicked may be humility and virtue, and at other times a very great temptation. I have had experience of this so I know it is true. Humility, however deep it may be, neither disquiets or troubles the soul; it is accompanied by peace, joy and tranquility. . . . Far from disturbing the soul it enlarges it and makes it fit to serve God better. The other kind of distress only disturbs and upsets the mind and troubles the soul, so grievous is it. I think the devil is anxious for us to believe that we arc humble and, if he can, to lead us to distrust God.

When you find yourselves in this state, cease thinking, so far as you can, of your own wretchedness and think of the mercy of God and of His love and His sufferings for us. If your state of mind is the result of temptation you will be unable to do even this, for it will not allow you to quieten your thoughts or to fix them on anything, but will only weary you the more; it will be a great thing if you can recognize it as a temptation. This is what happens when we perform excessive penances in order to make ourselves believe that, because of w'hat wre are doing, we are more penitent than others. If we conceal our penances from our confessor or spiritual director, or if we are told to give them up and do not do so, then that is a clear case of temptation. Always try to obey, however much it may hurt you to do so, for that is the greatest possible perfection.

There is another very dangerous kind of temptation: a feeling of security caused by the belief that we shall never again return to our past faults and to the pleasures of the world. T know all about these things now', we say, 'and I realize that they all come to an end. I get more pleasure from the things of God.' If this temptation comes to beginners it is very serious, because, having this sense of security, they think nothing of running into occasions of sin. . . . The devil, seeing that here are souls which may do him harm and be of great help to others, does all in his power to prevent them from rising again. However many consolations and pledges of love the Lord may give you, therefore, you must never be so sure of yourself as to cease to be afraid of falling back again, and you must keep yourselves from occasions of sin.

Show us then, O Good Master, some way in which we may live through this most dangerous water without frequent surprise. The best way we can do this is to use the love and fear given us by his Majesty. For love will make us quicken our steps, while fear will make us look where we are setting our feet so that we shall not fall on a road where there are so many obstacles.

II. ST JOHN OF THE CROSS

(The quotations selected here are from the *Spiritual Canticle,* 3 and 24.)

1. *The strongest temptations are those which come from the devil:*

The devils are called 'strong' because they attack with great fury; also because their temptations are harder to overcome and more fierce and difficult to understand than those of the world and the flesh. Also because they reinforce their arms by using these other enemies to wage war against the soul.

2. *Prayer and mortification as remedies:*

The soul which seeks to overcome their strength will be unable to do so without prayer, nor will it be able to understand their deceits without mortification and humility. Therefore St Paul warns the faithful in these words: You must wear all the weapons in God's armoury if you would find strength to resist the cunning of the devil. It is not against flesh and blood that we enter the lists; we have to do with princedoms and powers, with those who have mastery of the world in these dark days, with malign influences in an order higher than ours (Eph. 6. 12).

3. *The flesh against the spirit:*

The soul also says that it will 'cross the frontiers', by which is understood the reluctance and rebellions which the flesh feels against the spirit. As St Paul says: The impulses of nature and the impulses of the spirit are at war with one another: either is clean contrary to the other, and that is why you cannot do all that your will approves (Gal. 5. 17). The flesh draws itself up, like a frontier, to resist the spiritual progress of the soul. The soul, in its turn, must pass these frontiers and remove the difficulties, casting down, by the strength and determination of the spirit, all sensual appetites and natural inclinations, because as long as these are in the soul the spirit is hindered by them to such an extent that it cannot pass to the true joys and delights of the spiritual order.

4. *Perfect union with God is the sovereign remedy:*

The lions' dens are safe and protected from all other animals because these latter fear the strength and the bravery of the lion within and do not dare to enter or even to pass close by. Thus, each of the virtues, when the soul possesses them perfectly, is like a lion's den for the soul, in which she dwells. . . . The soul united with Christ in these virtues, is like a lion, because then she receives the very properties and powers of God himself. Therefore the soul is sheltered and strong in each of the virtues and in them all as a whole.

The devils do not dare to attack such a soul, secure in her union with God, because they fear her ... as they fear him and do not even dare to look at her. The devil is very much afraid *of* the soul which has reached perfection.

III. FRAY LUIS DE LEON*

Because he (Satan) gloried in his knowledge, God ordained that with his own hands he should bring upon himself so great an evil; with the death which he had introduced into the world he killed Christ, and thus gave life to the world. For this he can blame no one but himself, no matter how much he may rave in his despair, because by seeking Christ's death he flung himself into extreme misery; and in his hatred for men, he lifted them out of their slavery and brought them into eternal glory.

All this of which we have been speaking Christ merited by his death. After death he put it into execution by going down into hell, treading under foot the pride of Satan and putting him in chains. The third day he returned to life, never more to die; then he ascended into heaven in triumph, where he placed our flesh and blood in that seat of honour on God's right hand which Satan had desired for himself.

IV. ST IGNATIUS OF LOYOLAf

Rules for the discernment of spirits

The soul is moved by diverse spirits which it is important to discern, in order to follow the good and resist the evil. The following are some rules, of which the first are suited to souls less perfect; the others to those who are more advanced.

Pule i. Let us suppose that a soul easily falls into mortal sin and goes from fall to fall. To plunge it deeper into crime the devil normally employs the charms of sensual pleasures and all the baits of the senses, which he constantly places before the eyes. On the contrary, to free him from sin the good spirit never ceases to prick his conscience with the sting of remorse and the advice of reason.

Pule 2. But if the soul should set itself to use every effort in order to purify itself from its sins and to advance every day more and more in the service of God, the evil spirit, in order to stop and embarrass it, throws in its way every kind of scruple, disquiet, specious pretext, trouble and agitation. The good spirit, on the other hand, as soon as we begin to amend, encourages, strengthens, consoles, softens even to tears, enlightens the understanding, spreads peace

* From various passages in *The Names of Christ.*
t From *The Spiritual Exercises.*

in the heart, smooths all difficulties and obstacles, so that every day more freely and more joyously, we advance in virtue by the practice of good works.

Rule 5. During times of desolation the evil spirit makes us feel his influence. By following his inspirations we cannot arrive at any good or useful decision; we must, therefore, beware at such times of reconsidering or making any innovation whatsoever in what relates to our resolutions and our state of life; instead we must persevere in what we have decided on in the day or hour of consolation, under the influence of the good spirit.

Rule 7. Under the pressure of desolation the following are the thoughts which should sustain us: Divine grace remains in us, although it may have ceased to be perceptible; although the first ardour of our charity is no longer felt, we still have all that is required for doing good and for working out our salvation. . . .

Rule 9. Desolation most frequently arises from one of three causes: (1) Perhaps we have deserved to be deprived of divine consolations for want of diligence and fervour in our spiritual exercises. (2) Perhaps God is trying us. He wishes to see what we are and how we act in his service and for his glory, even though he does not bestow upon us every day the rewards of his Spirit in gifts and sensible graces. (3) Or perhaps it is a lesson he is giving us: he wishes to prove to us by experience that to procure fervour of devotion, ardent love, abundant tears, or to preserve ourselves in these spiritual joys, is beyond our natural strength and is a free gift of his bounty'.

Rule 12. Satan, when he attacks us, may be compared to a woman daring to contend with her husband. Let her husband oppose her firmly and she soon lays aside her warlike mood and quickly leaves the field to him.... So when Satan sees the soldier of Jesus Christ with his head erect, his heart imperturbable, replying to every attack without flinching, he at once loses courage; but if he should perceive him trembling at the first shock and ready to ask for mercy then he will attack at once with redoubled fury and with a ferocity which is unexampled among wild beasts enraged against their prey. . . .

Rule 13. ... so the grand artifice of Satan is to induce the soul he wishes to win for himself to keep secret his suggestions; and when they are made known to a confessor or an enlightened director, his rage and fury are at their height, because his snare is discovered and his efforts rendered useless.

Further rules for the discerning of spirits

Rule i. The operation of God and the good angels is to shed on the soul in which they act a true spiritual joy. . . . On the contrary, the devil, finding this joy in the soul, labours to destroy it by certain sophistries, covered by a false appearance of truth.

Rule 4. The evil spirit knows well how to transform himself into an angel of light. Aware of the pious desires of the soul, he will at first second them, but soon he will begin to lead the soul to his own ends. Thus, at first he will feign to consent to your good and holy thoughts and even applaud them; but by degrees he will lead you into his hidden snares and entangle you in his dark meshes.

Rule 5. We must, therefore, submit our inspirations and thoughts to a strict and attentive examination. Their beginning, progress and end must be carefully considered. Are all these good? It is, then, our good angel who inspired them. On the other hand, is there anything really bad about them, anything that leads us away from good or that urges us to something below the standard which we have chosen; anything that tires the soul, casting it into anguish and trouble, making it lose the peace, the repose and serenity which it enjoys? If such is the case it is an evident sign that the inspiration comes from the spirit of darkness and that it conceals some snare he is setting for us.

Rule 6. When we have discovered the evil serpent ... it is very useful to go over again in spirit the way by which the tempter led us, to take to pieces the plot he had so cleverly laid, to note by what specious pretexts he began to make us listen to him. . . . This study of his hateful moves will make us more capable of resisting him in the future.

V. BLESSED JOHN OF ÁVILA

A: The reasons for Christ's temptations

1. *To experience our temptations and to help us:*

The love of his heart for us is so great that he never forgets us or turns his eyes away from our needs, our weakness and miseries; neither does he take away his hand or his power to help us as a true High Priest, who has compassion on our weakness. Therefore his mercy deigned to allow the devil to approach and to tempt him in order that, tempted in all things as we are, without sin, he might experience our temptations, and so that we might have some consolation at the sight of our Lord being tempted, believing that we shall be freed, by him . . . and that you, my brother, may not be

♦From the Sermon for the First Sunday of Lent.

faint-hearted, thinking that God has deserted you. Rather you should believe that, overcoming temptations with the help of Christ, they will become part of your crown and the labour and trouble they cause you will be turned into joy.

2. *That we may be on our guard:*

The second reason is that we may know that there are devils who tempt us, we have enemies and trials and there is a state of war between us and them; therefore we must be on our guard. ...

How weak we are and how careless in this matter, taking little or no notice of these things. It would seem stupid were a soldier at war to engage in trading or, during the battle, occupy himself in affairs proper to times of peace, singing and giving himself up to pleasure.

B: The way Satan fights against us

1. *Using all possible methods:*

There is no possible method of warfare which this enemy and evil tempter does not employ, nor is there any type of combat which he could try and does not. . . day and night he tempts us, and in every' place he persecutes us. Even the best servants of God are disconcerted at times and would not know how to defend themselves were it not for the help of our Lord.

2. *He is a specialist in the art of lying:*

What promises he makes to us and how many deceits he practices in order to deceive us and to make us believe him! He who has nothing cannot give anything except that which he has, fire and hell. He invites you to pleasures which, he says, will never cease; he says that he will give you honours, great riches and prosperity in this life. He never keeps his word because he has no power over anything and can only give you what he himself possesses, to burn for ever in the fires of hell.

C: Why does God permit us to be tempted?

1. *That we may hope in God:*

We have already spoken of your enemies, their strength and cunning; but even stronger is God, who can free you and do more good than the devil can do evil. He merely wishes you to have confidence in him and stay close to his side, that you trust him and distrust yourself. Then he can help you and with his assistance you can overcome any powers of hell which come against you. . . . Stay always close to him, because if you do not, then you will fall and will be afraid of many things. If we had a heart full of courage and desire to suffer something for the honour of God, then temptations would not frighten us.

2. *To teach us to distrust ourselves:*

It is convenient that we should be tempted, because through our weakness and temptations we know the need we have of the favour and the help of God which we seek from him through prayer, seeing clearly that without it we can do nothing. Difficulties and temptations are of more use to us than consolations and gifts, because in grave temptations and trials we shall know that it is the hand of God which sustains us.

D: Weapons against temptation

Blessed John of Avila suggests the following as the principal weapons against the attacks of the devil: temperance in food and drink, watchfulness (especially necessary for priests and bishops), living faith in the cross of Christ, the use of the word of God in the Scriptures and giving battle in the sphere chosen by the devil so as to defeat him on his own ground. Thus, we should overcome pride by humility, anger by meekness, impurity by our greater chastity.

VI. ST FRANCIS DE SALES

A: Stages in temptation

The three steps in the descent to iniquity are: temptation, delectation, and consent; and though these three actions are not so clearly discerned in all kinds of sins, yet they are clearly seen in great and enormous sins.

1. *Difference between feeling and consent:*

Though the temptation to any sin whatsoever should last all our life, it cannot render us displeasing to the divine Majesty, provided that we do not take pleasure in it and that we do not consent to it; the reason is that in temptation we are not active but passive; and since Ave take no pleasure in it we cannot be in any way blamed for it. St Paul suffered for a long time temptations of the flesh and so far was he from displeasing God on that account that on the contrary, God was glorified thereby; the blessed Angela of Foligno suffered such cruel temptations of the flesh that she moves us to compassion when she relates them; St Francis and St Benedict also suffered great temptations, when the one cast himself into the thorns and the other into the snow to moderate them; and nevertheless they lost nothing of the grace of God for all that, but gained a great increase of it thereby.

2. *Pleasure and consent:*

But as for the delectation which may follow temptation, inasmuch as we have two parts in our soul, the one inferior and the other

* From *Introduction to the Devout Life.*

superior, and since the inferior does not always follow the superior, hut acts independently, it often happens that the inferior part takes pleasure in the temptation, without the consent—nay, against the will—of the superior.

3. *Temptations should cause us to have courage and to fear:*

My Philothea, these great assaults and these strong temptations are only permitted by God against souls that he wishes to raise to his pure and excellent love; but it does not follow that they are afterwards certain of attaining thereto, for it has often happened that those who have been constant in such violent assaults were afterwards overcome in quite small temptations, because they did not correspond faithfully with divine grace. . . . You must always be humble and fearful, not assuring yourself *of* being able to overcome small temptations because you have overcome big ones, except by continual fidelity' to his Majesty.

B: Remedies against temptations

I. *Prayer:*

As soon as you find yourself in any temptation, do what little children do when they see a wolf or a bear in the country; for straightway they run to the arms of their father or mother, or at all events they call them to their help and assistance. Have recourse in like manner to God, imploring his mercy and his assistance: it is the remedy which our Lord teaches: Pray, that ye enter not into temptation.

2. *The Cross:*

If you find that, notwithstanding, the temptation perseveres or grows stronger, run in spirit to embrace the holy Cross, as if you saw Jesus Christ crucified before you; protest that you will not consent to the temptation, and ask him for help against it, and so long as the temptation lasts, cease not to protest that you do not wish to consent to it.

3. *Distract the attention:*

Divert your mind from it by means *of* good and praiseworthy occupations; for these occupations, entering into your heart and taking possession of it, will drive away the evil temptations and suggestions.

4. *Be open with our spiritual director:*

The sovereign remedy against all temptations, great or small, is to open the heart and to communicate the suggestions, feelings and affections which we have to our director; for note that the first condition which the evil one makes with the soul which he wishes to seduce is silence . . . while, on the contrary, God in his inspirations, requires above all things that we should make them known to our superiors and directors.

5. *Do not argue with the enemy:*

Do not dispute with your enemy, but give him no answer at all save that which our Lord gave him: Begone, Satan, the Lord thy God shalt thou adore and him only shalt thou serve.

C: Small temptations

1. *Their danger:*

Perhaps we may be able to gain greater profit from fighting well against small temptations; for just as the great temptations surpass the small ones in quality, so the small ones surpass the great ones so much in number, that the victory over these may be comparable to that over the greater ones. Wolves and bears are certainly more dangerous than flies, but they do not cause us so much annoyance, nor do they exercise our patience so much. It is easy to refrain from murder, but it is difficult to avoid those little outbursts of anger, whereof the occasions present themselves at every moment. . . . In a word, these little temptations to anger, suspicion, jealousy, envy, flirtation, frivolity, vanity, duplicity, affectation, artifice, impure thoughts, continually exercise those very people who are most devout; therefore we must prepare ourselves for this combat with great diligence; and rest assured that for every victory which we gain over these little enemies, a precious stone will beset in the crown of glory which God is preparing for us in heaven.

2. *Remedies:*

Despise then these little attacks, and do not so much as think of what they suggest, but let them buzz about your ears as much as they like and fly here and there about you, just as we do with flies; and when they are about to sting you and settle on your heart, do nothing more than quite quietly drive them away, not fighting against them or answering them, but performing acts contrary to them, whatever they may be, and especially acts of the love of God.

D: To strengthen us against future temptations

i. *Fight against dominant passion:*

Consider from time to time what passions are predominant in your soul and when you have discovered them, adopt a manner of life which is altogether contrary to them, in thoughts, words and deeds. For example, if you find yourself inclined to vanity, think often of the miseries of this human life; consider how troublesome these vanities will be to the conscience at the moment of death; how unworthy they are of a generous heart, that they are only the toys and amusements of little children, and such like things. ... If you are inclined to give and to receive love, often think how dangerous it is, both to yourself and to others; how unworthy a thing it is to profane the noblest affection of the soul, and to use it merely for

the sake of diversion; how veil it deserves the accusation *of* extreme frivolity of spirit.

2. *Practise of virtue:*

Finally, in time of peace—that is to say, when temptations to your besetting sin do not trouble you, make acts of the contrary virtue, and should no occasions for such acts present themselves, seek to meet them, for by this means you will strengthen your heart against future temptations.

VII. BOURDALOUE

The fight against temptation

I. *Two kinds of temptation^ voluntary and involuntary:*

Without grace we cannot overcome temptation meritoriously; with it there is no trial which cannot be conquered. This grace is never lacking, but it is not always granted when and how we would wash. There are two classes of temptation, voluntary and involuntary. In the case *of the* former it is useless to expect God's help unless we give up the occasion of sin, and even then we must not expect the grace to fight but rather the grace to run away. Even in the case of involuntary temptations we must not expect to receive the grace to fight them unless we are ready to resist, especially by the use *of* mortification.

2. *Flee from temptation:*

In voluntary temptations this is necessary for the following reasons: it is unlawful to run risks with our salvation; we *all* know our weaknesses and to know this and not to *flee from the danger is to expose* ourselves to temptation foolishly. What *title* have we to the necessary graces unless we take precautions? Not in justice, because they are free gifts of God; not from fidelity, because God has not promised his help in such circumstances; nor from mercy', because he who exposes himself to danger willingly has forfeited his title to mercy. Should such a one seek help from heaven God would reply: If it were a case of my glory, charity, necessity or even a chance encounter which took you into danger my providence would not be wanting; but it is you yourself who have sought the dangers of the world, the pleasures, friendships and spectacles .. .

3. *Do not tempt God:*

But why does God deny his help to the one who voluntarily exposes himself to temptation? In the last instance it is because of the honour and respect due to his grace, so that it may not serve as a pretext for temerity and also, at times, to chastise our presumption since to defy temptation is to defy God and tempt him. There can

* From *Sermon Preached on the First Sunday of Lent.*

be no more fitting punishment for such a sin than to be abandoned by him. We tempt him, in this case, in three ways:

(a) In his omnipotence, by asking him for an unnecessary miracle, since we could deal with the situation by abandoning the occasion. God told Lot to abandon Sodom: he did so and was saved from the conflagration.

(b) In his mercy, by stretching its limits beyond those laid down by God.

(c) Because it is hypocritical to pray 'lead us not into temptation' and then throw ourselves into it.

O Christians, when it is a question of serving a mere man you are perfectly willing to break all ties and bonds; well, God's service demands just that of you!

4. *Fight temptation:*

When the temptation is involuntary we can count on the graces necessary if we are ready to fight, above all by mortifying our flesh; because grace is not given to us according to our good pleasure, but in the measure fixed by God. From this we may draw certain conclusions:

(a) Even in necessary temptations God wants us to use grace according to our state, and our state as Christians is one of continual struggle of the spirit against the flesh. Therefore, to expect grace without being willing to fight is mere stupidity.

(b) The first principle in war is to weaken the enemy; in this case the flesh. Therefore it is necessary to bring it into subjection by mortification. I can never convince myself that a body nourished by pleasures can enter into the lists against torture and death.

(c) Limiting ourselves to the fact that mortification is necessary in all walks of life, we can say that there is a time set aside especially for it, namely, Lent. Catholics know this, but do not practise it. Even among the devout there are many who avoid the obligation by seeking unnecessary dispensations from it. ... I may add that those who dispense themselves with the greatest ease are usually those who need it most; the rich, sinners, the worldly, youths and those women who are surrounded by flatterers and by temptations.

Remember that the Law of God makes no distinction of classes or ranks. Remember that you are Christians like the others and in greater danger than they. Add to your fasts and penances good works and the word of God.

SECTION VI. PAPAL TEXTS

The modern world differs from former ages because in it there is greater ignorance of divine things, an ignorance which extends

♦ From the *Addresses to Lenten Preachers* of 1940, 1941, 1943, and 1946.

to all classes of the people, intellectuals and poor alike. No one wishes to hear anything about God; and even for scientists and doctors, engaged in their erudite investigations into the mysteries of nature, he is the 'unknown God' of the Athenians.

For this very reason it is of supreme importance to make full use of the opportunities provided in Lent for preaching to the people, with special emphasis on the main truths *of the* Faith, such as those contained in the first six articles of the Creed. Without this, as the Holy Father says: 'How can man living here below avoid evil ways and walk the true road of salvation and virtue?' The faithful are hungry for these truths, especially *if they* are presented in a simple fashion and from the heart. Not eloquence, but real sincerity is the key note, together with a sense *of* dedication to the mission entrusted to his priests by Jesus Christ.

We need to preach solid doctrine, especially Christ the Redeemer, too little known and loved. No one can lift up fallen man and free him from his chains except Christ, the one Mediator between God and man. We need to preach the Christian idea *of death and* the judgement, with its rewards and punishments. We should also teach the faithful the power and glory of the Holy *Ghost, gift of* the Most High and our Counsellor, the Light of hearts who purifies us from all dross and heals our wounds. From him, the eternal fire comes down to us from heaven, that fire of charity *which* encourages and sustains the Church. We should also preach on the Church, the refuge for those who hope, believe and love, with the Vicar *of* Christ at her head, the centre of all unity and the fount of all authority. The faithful should be urged to be proud of the Church and to love her as their Mother.

We should also exhort the faithful to receive *Holy Communion* frequently, that banquet of the Risen Lord, reminder *of his Passion* and death and pledge of our future resurrection to *glory with him.* There the whole Christian family should appear together, with Christ, its Head, the source of all spiritual progress. Experience teaches us that, in the struggle between good and evil, we cannot count too much on those who approach Holy Communion *only once* a year. We need strong united ranks of men and young people who, keeping in close contact with Christ, receive the Bread of Life at least once a month and encourage others to *follow their* example. This is one of the most urgent and most important duties of the pastoral ministry.

It is important, too, to point out the infinite mercy of God in pardoning sinners. 'Teach your hearers,' says the Holy Father, 'to see in this mystery the infinite goodness of God who, in the secret conversation between priest and penitent, has erected the inviolable tribunal of his reconciliation with man and his pardon, however grave the offences which weigh down a conscience, now repentant.'

Lent affords us a wonderful opportunity of talking to the faithful about eternal life, stirring up in them a desire for God; also of preaching the basic doctrines concerning hell, with prudence it is true, but without concealing the stark reality of it. We should prepare them for the Feast of Easter and for the final resurrection, leading them to God by way of the ten commandments. 'It is your task, beloved sons, to help men to make themselves more fitted for salvation, leading them to the mountain of the Lord, that he may show them his ways and that they may follow his ideals.'

The Pope also stresses the need for prayer, penance and fasting. Prayer is needed more than ever in the times in which we live. It is a most powerful weapon against God's enemies and the only thing which will keep us firm in the Faith. 'It brings to you the blessing of God, strengthens the Faith, gives birth to the fear of God and true confidence in him, mutual respect, love and fortitude in these difficult times.'

Speaking of fasting, he points out that modern conditions have made it necessary to relax somewhat the old laws of the Church, but, realizing the dangers and the needs of the present day, Christians worthy of the name should make up for this by voluntary works of penance. 'With all our heart we plead with you for full and sincere sorrow for your past sins, together with full detestation of them and a sincere purpose of amendment. . . . We beg of you to lighten the burden and the debt of temporal punishment by means of good works which will make satisfaction to God, such as prayers, mortifications, fasting.'

Many pay too little attention to the need for penance, while others do not understand it: Penance is absolutely necessary for us, according to those words, If you do not do penance you shall all likewise perish (Luke 13. 5), because nothing has more power to suppress the vicious inclinations of the soul and bring into subjection to the intellect the natural appetites of man.

SECTION VII. SERMON SCHEMES

I. LITURGICAL

A: Lent begins

i. *The Church's invitation:*

(a) The Liturgy presents to our minds this Sunday the picture of Christ fasting and praying on the mountain.

(b) Together with this scene she issues a solemn invitation taken from the Epistle for Ash Wednesday: The trumpet, there, in Sion! Here is fasting proclaimed, the citizens assembled; the folk summoned, the cleansing rites performed, the elders met; weanling

must be there and babe unweaned, groom leave his chamber and bride her bower (Joel 2. 15-16).

(c) The Church exhorts us with this invitation to join Christ in the desert. God says to us: Time now, the Lord says, to turn the whole bent of your hearts back to me, with fasting and with mourners' tears (Joel 2. 12).

B: Characteristics of our conversion during Lent

1. *Sorrow for sin*—an idea repeated frequently in all the Masses of Lent.

(a) Ash Wednesday in the Epistle: It is your hearts, not the garments you wear, that must be torn asunder.

(b) In the antiphon for the blessing of the ashes the Church says: Hark how the priests, that wait upon the Lord, make lament between porch and altar, cn'ing aloud: Spare thy people, Lord, spare them; thy chosen people, do not put them to the shame of obeying heathen masters (Joel 2. 17).

(c) The Church also prays, in the Response for Ash Wednesday: Let us repair the evil we have done by sinning through ignorance, lest, being caught unprepared by the day of death, we should seek time for repentance and should not find it. Give ear, O Lord, and have mercy, because we have sinned against thee.

2. *The austerity of our lives:*

(a) Like Christ in the desert, we must live through this period of Lent isolated from the world as far as possible, in prayer and mortification.

(b) The hymn for Matins tells us how' this is to be done: 'Let us use more sparingly food and drink, talk, sleep and pleasures, avoiding harmful things which can ruin weak hearts, thus denying our cunning foe occasion for his tyrannies.'

3. *Charity:*

Without this virtue neither austerity nor fasting can possibly please God (cf. Isaias 58. 3 if.).

C: St Paul and the Lenten programme

1. In the Epistle for the 1st Sunday of Lent we have a complete Lenten programme.

2. St Paul invites us all to an interior conversion that the grace of God may bear fruit in us (2 Cor. 6. 1).

3. This conversion has two main parts, one negative and the other positive: We are careful not to give offence to anyone (2 Cor. 6. 3) and As God's ministers we must do everything to make ourselves acceptable (*ibid.* 6. 4).

4. He goes on to name certain things in which we can give good example: in our sufferings, austerity, charity and purity of life.

II. THE GOSPEL

A: Fasting

Why does the Church esteem fasting so highly and recommend it so often? especially since it seems to go against all our natural inclinations. It is a reasonable practice (common to all cultured religions) which is imposed in order to avoid some evil or acquire some good for the soul or body.

1. *For it to be an act of virtue the following are required:*

(a) It must not be disordered.

(b) The reason must direct it towards some spiritual or material good.

i. It is disordered in itself when it is carried to extremes, against the principle of preserving the health of the body.

ii. Reason can find several motives for fasting. We may study these more in detail.

2. *Justification for fasting:*

The main reason is that we are composed of soul and body.

(a) The way to overcome the passions is to begin with the body, weakening it with discretion and strengthening the will by mortification.

(b) The majority of our sins come from the fact that we leave God in order to run after some material good.

(c) From these reasons it is easy to see the real purpose of fasting which can be explained following St Thomas and St Bernardine of Siena (cf. Serm. v *in die ciner.*).

3. *The purpose of fasting* (cf. St Basil, p. 16):

(a) Fasting tames the passions:

i. I buffet my own body, and make it my slave: or I, who have preached to others, may myself be rejected as worthless (1 Cor. 9. 27).

ii. The soul was created master of the body; sin has made it the body's slave. Fasting restores the right order of things. 'Without Ceres and Bacchus Venus growrs cold.'

iii. Samson, when he exercised temperance, was the terror of the Philistines; but, overcome by the love of pleasure and of wine, he fell into Delilah's hands.

iv. We should remember the penances of St Jerome and other saints—have we more graces than they?

(b) It strengthens us against attacks of the passions:

i. When the body is weakened by fasting the soul becomes stronger, it is made more perfect; greater graces are obtained from God. Consequently, temptations are weaker and there is more power to resist.

Hunger is the friend of chastity and the enemy of impurity (cf. St Ambrose).

ii. From fasting come chaste thoughts, rational desires, salutary counsels, at the same time concupiscence dies and the soul is rejuvenated, being filled with virtues (St Leo M.).

iii. On one occasion, when the apostles could not cast out a certain devil, Christ said to them: This kind is not cast out but by prayer and fasting (Matt. 17. 20). There is no need to restrict this remark to certain kinds of diabolic possession. It may be extended to the more violent types of temptation, according to the example of the saints, who overcame these by prayer and mortification.

4. *It makes satisfaction to God and placates his anger* (cf. St Ambrose):

With regard to our sins fasting does the following for us:

(a) It secures God's pardon:

i. This is the constant teaching of the prophets.

ii. The practice of the Church confirms this; the ancient discipline required more rigorous fasts in order to secure absolution.

iii. Joel 2. 11-18 states it clearly.

(b) It wards off God's punishments:

God acts either justly or with mercy. By executing this justice on ourselves we obtain mercy from God. The example of the Ninevites is proof of this. God is disarmed when he sees us chastising ourselves.

(c) It pays the debt of temporal punishment due to sins:

Even after we have obtained pardon some of this debt usually remains, David, after his forgiveness, was punished by the death of his child. Fasting and almsdeeds are the two classical ways of paying off this debt.

5. *Fasting is one of the chief ascetical ways of purifying the soul:*

Sanctity in any degree always supposes two things, the struggle against the passions and progress in virtue by means of positive acts.

(a) Let him not think of starting along the road of the spiritual life who has not tamed by fasting the enemy within him (St Gregory, *Mor.* L. 30. c. 13).

(b) He will not be able to overcome greater vices who has not been able to restrain himself from gluttony (Cassian, *Inst.* L. 6. c. 13).

6. *Fasting strengthens the soul for positive acts of virtue:*

(a) The great saints have always observed rigorous fasts.

(b) The mind becomes quicker to appreciate heavenly things (St Thomas).

(c) The prophets received their revelations after a preparatory period of fasting; e.g. Moses, Daniel.

(d) The will is more energetic when it is brought into subjection by depriving itself of even necessary things; when it experiences less difficulty from the flesh it receives greater help from God (cf. Esther and Judith).

Conclusion: Meditate on the words of St John Chrysostom: Fast because you have sinned; fast in order not to sin; fast in order to receive (Serm. 2. *de ieiunio.* PG. 27. 313).

B: The Desert

Seek a proper time to retire into thyself, and think often of the benefits of God (*Imitation,* L. 1. c. 20).

1. *Solitude removes the obstacles to sanctity:*

Because it separates us from the world, its pleasures, distractions and constant temptations.

2. *It frees us from a three-fold war* (St Ephraem):

(a) from the war of the eyes; i.e. from occasions of sin through the sense of sight. It may not be possible to flee from these altogether, but we can all be careful to observe the custody of the eyes;

(b) from the war of hearing; flattery; distracting words of gossip about others; frivolous talk; false doctrines;

(c) from the -war of the tongue (cf. James 3. 2-6).

3. *It makes us draw nearer to God:*

(a) Because it separates us from distractions and gives God a chance to speak to our hearts.

(b) It prepares us for our mission in life, e.g. John the Baptist.

(c) In it we learn God's secrets (cf. Osee 2. 16).

(d) In noise and distractions we can lose God; in silence he can be found again.

C: Christ and Satan

I. *The two captains:*

(a) In the Gospel of today we see these two champions, Christ and Satan, in the lists against each other.

(b) This is a symbol of the daily battle of the Christian, who comes under the influence of them both.

(c) Let us study this influence each has on his followers to see it clearly and to have more hope and confidence in the final victory.

2. *Satan: captain of the evil ones:*

(a) Christ calls sinners the sons of the devil: You belong to your father, that is, the devil, and are eager to gratify the appetites which are your father's. He from the first was a murderer; and as for truth, he has never taken his stand upon that; there is no truth in him. When he utters falsehood, he is only uttering that which is natural to him; he is all false, and it was he who gave falsehood its birth (John 8. 44).

(b) His command over others is external, not internal—he cannot give internal life or vitality to anybody.

(c) Although the interior fortress of the soul of the sinner is closed to him, still the devil can and does incite him to fresh sins, blinding his mind and putting evil thoughts before him so that he may fall repeatedly into fresh sins.

(d) In all this he has one motive: to separate the soul from God by making it misuse its free will; a purpose clearly seen in the temptation of our first parents.

(e) He tries to deceive us, as he did Christ, by the tortuous path of the three concupiscences.

(f) The fruits obtained by his followers are death for themselves and disunity in the social order. He neither unites nor gives life. He is death, both to the individual and to society.

3. *Christ, the captain of the good:*

(a) Christ also is captain *of* a great army:

i. But his leadership is superior to that of the devil; think of the soul united to Christ and to the Church by sanctifying grace; a living member *of* the Mystical Body.

ii. He also acts on us from without, by his doctrine, his example, his precepts; all of which lead us to victory.

(b) The best way to describe this leadership is to say that Christ is the Head of the good. This phrase means that:

i. He gives his members new life, an internal influence *of* sanctifying grace which comes from his own grace as Head *of* the body.

ii. This new life gives rise to those words of St Paul: Yet I am alive; or rather, not I; it is Christ that lives in me. True, I am living, here and now, this mortal life; but my real hope is the faith I have in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me (Gal. 2. 20).

iii. For the same reason, with great humility the Apostle affirms: Nothing is beyond my powers, thanks to the strength God gives me (Philip. 4. 13).

iv. Therefore he can defy all his enemies: Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? For thy sake, says the Scripture, we face death at every moment, reckoned no better than sheep marked down for the slaughter. Yet in all this we are conquerors, through him who has granted us his love. Of this I am fully persuaded, neither death, nor life, nor angels or principalities or powers, neither the height above us nor the depth beneath us, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which comes to us in Christ Jesus, our Lord (Rom. 8. 35-39).

v. Face to face with our enemy, the devil, we must allow Christ to take command of our soul and renew the life which he has given us, confident of final victory. What he said to his Church, i.e. that the gates of hell should never prevail against her (Matt. 16. 18), is also true of each one of us, if we remain united to our Captain and our Head.

D: Christ's temptations and ours

1. *The Gospel:*

Christ's life is the perfect book from which we receive daily our instruction. We can learn a great deal from this chapter on his temptations.

2. *The tempter:*

Who is he? The devil, who also has other names:

(a) The enemy:

He seeks evil all the time, as he did in the case of Christ. He will never do me any good, seeking all the time the loss of my soul. Let me never forget this.

(b) The father of lies:

He will always try to deceive me, never speaking the truth, but disguising his real intentions. He showed himself to Eve as one "who sought only her good. In the case of Christ, he showed himself under the guise of one who wanted to help him in his bodily needs, make easier his appearance before the Jewish world, promising things he could not give. He will also promise me pleasures which will afterwards shut me up in a hell of fire for ever. He will not speak to me of sin directly, but will try to place me on the road which leads to it.

3. *How does he tempt?*

(a) To attain his ends he acts first on the senses and then on the higher powers of the soul, awakening vanity, pride and avarice.

(b) Each stage of man's life has its temptations. In youth it is usually the appeal of the senses; in middle age temptation to vanity. In the last stages of life we seek the comfort of riches and command over others.

(c) In the supernatural life the first temptations are the most carnal; later, as we make more progress, they become more subtle.

4. *Who is tempted?*

(a) It is Christ, the Son of God made man. If God allows himself to be tempted shall I live in ignorance of the peril which surrounds me? Shall I be discouraged on seeing myself subject to the same temptation?

(b) Angelic purity consists in not suffering temptations; that of man, in not giving consent to them. St Paul was tempted; so were the saints. Shall I be immune? The devil has no reason to tempt the sinners; they are already easy prey. But he attacks especially those who are trying to advance in the practice of virtue (Ecclus. 2. 1; 2 Tim. 3.12).

5. *Who gave the devil permission to tempt Christ?*

(a) The Father; who, a few days before, had called him his 'beloved Son'.

(b) I also am a beloved son of God the Father; therefore the same thing will happen to me. Many of the advantages which Christ obtained through temptations will also be mine. Let us look at some of them:

i. *The glory of victory.* Job would not be famous were it not for his sufferings; Abraham's faith would not be so highly praised were it not for the fact that it was tried, when he was ordered to sacrifice his son.

ii. *The proof of virtue:* the same fire which consumes the straw assays the gold (St Augustine, in Ps. 2, n. 5).

iii. *Increase in humility:* what a difference in St Peter before his temptation (John 13. 37-38; 18. 15-27) and afterwards (John 21.15-19).

iv. *Recourse to God:* which increases our confidence and our gratitude to him (Ps. 116. 1-4).

6. *How did Christ act when he was tempted?*

(a) He did not seek temptation:

i. To look for temptation is to place our salvation in danger and to tempt God by asking him for a help which should not have been necessary if we had not thrown ourselves into danger—a help which he has not promised in such cases.

ii. David was holier than we are, and he sinned because *of* imprudence; Solomon was wiser, Samson stronger; but they fell. Are you seeking an occasion of triumph? No; what you are looking for is an occasion for perishing (St Augustine, Serm. 293. 2; PL. 39. 2301). There was a woman in Paradise and the victory went to the devil; there was not one in the desert, and he was defeated (St Augustine, Serm. 147. 3; PL. 39. 203).

(b) He does not argue with the tempter or compromise with him; he rejects him. To argue is to begin to consent, and to begin to consent is to begin the process of our condemnation; sometimes it is in itself a sin. The victory is to be won by attacking the enemy furiously, giving back blow for blow.

(c) lie makes use of the word of God, which will teach us the truth, as opposed to the false doctrines of the enemy, and will also tell us how to reject him.

7. *The final victory:*

(a) He was at once assisted by the angels, who ministered to his needs.

(b) He received in heaven much greater glory than the miserable praises which a few Jews would have given him in the Temple on seeing him descend from above; in heaven he reigns in glory and truth over all the kingdoms of the earth. The devil gives us false promises, but God will give us much more than we could ever dream of or the devil could ever offer.

E: Temptation and sin

1. *Temptation:*

(a) Leads to sin, but in itself it is not a sin.

i. Otherwise Christ would never have allowed himself to be tempted.

ii. It is a sin in the tempter, not in the one who suffers it (St Thomas, I. q. 48. a. 5. *ad yiuni).*

2. *The three stages of temptation:*

(a) Suggestion: consists in the proposal of some evil; it comes from without and represents to us in the imagination in a more or less vivid manner the attraction of something forbidden.

(b) Pleasure: a spontaneous movement of the sensual appetite towards the suggested good, due to our nature being weakened by concupiscence; this gives rise to a certain sensual pleasure.

(c) Consent: a conscious and responsible act of the will accepting the object proposed to it.

3. In the light of this doctrine we can judge the morality of temptation.

It is not a sin to feel temptation but only to consent to it; the first because it is not voluntary, the second because it is (St Francis de Sales . . .).

4. *Application of the doctrine:*

(a) The suggested or imaginative representation of evil under the aspect of good is not a sin provided it is not voluntary", no matter how long it lasts; because the will has no share in it (St Thomas, p. 21).

(b) Undeliberate pleasure which arises in the sensual appetite because of the evil suggestion is not a sin; but if it could have been avoided it is always a sin to accept it, 'according to the pleasure which is taken in it and the consent which is given to it, little or great, of long or short duration' (St Francis de Sales, *Vida Dev.* Ch. vi, p. 4).

(c) Consent is always a sin. It supposes full deliberation and a full acceptance of the will.

5. The following signs are usually given by spiritual writers as indicating lack of full consent:

(a) If the soul has put up a fight against consent both before and during the temptation.

(b) The absence of any habit of sin. In the case of a soul usually faithful to God's grace we must judge on what normally happens, especially if there is any doubt about whether consent has been given or not. The normal thing for such a soul, which has a delicate conscience and no habit of sin, is not to give way.

(c) A devout life is, in most cases a sign that there has been no consent in cases of doubt.

(d) Refraining from any external actions, when it would have been easy to do them.

6. *The obligation of resisting temptation:*

(a) We have to resist them positively:

i. passive resistance is usually not enough; unless, of course, there is a good reason for it;

ii. the obligation is a grave one if the temptation is grave;

iii. we must fight from the very beginning, because then the victory will be easier.

(b) Methods, according to St Alphonsus:

i. make an act of displeasure; this at least impedes consent to the pleasure which may follow from the temptation;

ii. think of the four last things and the death of Christ;

iii. prayer to our Lady, the saints and the guardian angels;

iv. act of the love of God with a renewal of our proposal to avoid all sin;

v. distract our minds from the temptation.

7. *After temptation:*

(a) We should not worry unduly about whether we have consented or not;

(b) Open our souls completely to our confessor or spiritual director and seek his advice. The first condition of the tempter is silence (cf. St Francis de Sales, p. 36).

F: The theology of temptation

1. *for the consolation of those who are tempted:*

(a) Souls suffer and complain when they arc tempted; for such as these this Gospel on the temptations of Christ is most consoling. Others complain because they do not see the reasons for temptation in God's plan. These ignore or forget that phrase in Ecclesiasticus: My son, if thy mind is to enter the Lord's service (wait there in his presence with honesty of purpose, and with all reverence) and prepare thyself to be put to the trial (Ecclus. 2. 1).

(b) Temptation is certainly an incitement to sin and comes from the enemy, whose idea is to destroy the work of God; but it has an important part to play in the advance in virtue and also in our relations with God.

2. *God does not tempt anyone:*

(a) This is the first truth to be learnt: Nobody, when he finds himself tempted, should say, I am being tempted by God. God may threaten us with evil, but he does not himself tempt anyone (James

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(b) Temptation cannot be willed by God nor can he be its author; but he can, and does, permit it for the sake of the fruit which he can bring from it, as he did in the case of Christ and the Saints. Therefore it is not to be wondered at that, at times, God is said to tempt us, but it should be understood in this sense and in no other.

3. *The divine view of temptation:*

(a) We may apply to temptations these words of St Ignatius: All other things or objects placed around man on earth have been created for him, to serve as means to assist him in the pursuit of the end for which he was created.

(b) The saints have always realized this (cf. James 1. 2; 1. 12). Enlightened by the gift of wisdom, they realize how precious temptation is, since when it attacks us, God is there to aid us with his special graces, because in times of temptation he takes special care of us. In a word, they make their own the sentiments of the Apostle: We are well assured that everything helps to secure the good of those who love God (Rom. 8. 28). The saints even tend to look on temptation as a sign of God's special love.

4. *God does not abandon ns:*

(a) Together with the temptation comes the grace *of God* who 'will not allow you to be tempted beyond your poïvers'. With the temptation itself he will ordain the issue of it, and will enable you to hold your own (1 Cor. 10. 13). The devil cannot do more against us than God allows him to do. It is always less than he would like and always within our powers.

(b) God knows the temptations which assail us; he regulates

their violence, calculates their effects and permits them in accordance with our strength. He gives his help in relation to the test which his providence has permitted; so that a greater temptation means more grace for the soul.

5. *Advantages which come from temptation:*

(a) Generally speaking we can say that temptations arc one of the ways along which God leads his chosen ones.

(b) Spiritual writers give several advantages which can accrue from temptations. Here are some of them:

i. they prove us: our value in terms of the spiritual life can be measured by the way we are faithful to God under the fire of temptation;

ii. they are useful in order to make us weary' of this world;

iii. they expiate our faults;

iv. they increase our merits; of such stuff is glory fashioned;

v. they are a source of spiritual joys and consolations;

vi. they teach us to be humble;

vii. through them virtue is increased and more deeply rooted in the soul. The piety of those who are tempted gives more guarantees than that of those who are not tried in this fire.

viii. they make us redouble our vigilance.

6. *Our attitude with regard to temptation:*

(a) If all that we have said is true would it not be better to seek them out rather than avoid them? This is false reasoning and rashness. Temptations are only useful in so far as they are permitted by God and fall within his plan for us. In themselves they are evil and a danger.

(b) Therefore:

i. To seek temptation, for example, by exposing our purity to danger, is really to tempt God. Christ could seek temptation because he knew it was the will of God for him and also because he realized that there was no danger in it for him; on the contrary, the greater glory of God would result from the devil's shattering defeat. From this it does not follow that we may do the same, because we neither know the will of God for us, nor do we realize the full danger. If we thrust ourselves rashly into temptation we cannot be sure of his help.

ii. It is very different when the temptation comes through the practice of virtue or through doing good; then we may continue quietly and safely to do the good work, even though we know that it will bring us frequent and violent temptations (St Thomas, p. 24). Times ot prayer, the practice of the spiritual life in all its degrees, normally afford the devil a splendid field for his activities. However, here it is not the temptation which is sought; it is merely permitted and endured. 0

7, *A paragraph of Blessed John of Avila:*

The paragraph we are about to quote has suffering for its context, but it can also be applied to temptations as a summary of what has gone before and to show how God uses these things as instruments to form the soul.

> Have you ever seen potters light their kilns? Have you noticed that thick, acrid smoke and the hell of fire which exists within? Who would ever think that the vessels within could ever be brought out except as ashes, or at least as black as pitch from the smoke! But, when the fury has passed, the fire has been extinguished and the kiln emptied, you will see those same clay vessels brought out white and hard as rock; those that were formerly brown are now as white as snow, fit to grace the table of a king. St Paul calls us earthen vessels ... God wishes to pass us through the kiln. Have patience, you are in the kiln of suffering . . . make sure that you are not brought out broken! Those only break in the kiln of suffering who lose patience. Do not be faint-hearted, no matter how fiercely the devil may stoke the fires; no matter how he may persecute you, trust in God (Ep. 21, BAC. tome i, p. 402).

G: Ambition

1. *Etymology:*

The third and most difficult temptation was to ambition (St Basil). The word means to embrace, surround a thing. All ambition is an extension of our zone of influence; and implies an embracing and encircling of the external world, bringing it in some way under our dominion.

2. *Ambition for riches* (St Thomas, p. 23; Suarez, p. 26);

The real name for it is avarice and it is the lowest form of ambition, because it embraces purely material goods. It may be less grave than other forms of this sin from the moral aspect, but it is spiritually extremely dangerous:

(a) Because it takes possession of the soul without our being aware of it. We do need some material things, but where is the limit to be drawn between necessity and avarice?

(b) Because it may easily enter into the soul under the form of good. Individuals and societies allow themselves to be carried away by the desire for riches in order to do some good work. There can easily be deception in this.

(c) Others, more or less near and dear to us, may move us to fall into this sin. How many times a wife is guilty of her husband's inordinate and sinful acquisition of wealth!

(d) Because it soon drags us down to other and greater sins; to pleasures, inordinate love of honours, stealing and pride. Riches

provide a constant temptation because of the facilities they give us for satisfying the passions.

3. *Ambition for power:*

(a) It leads us to bring others under our domination.

i. Power gives us social and juridical authority over others. It puts the community' in our hands and obliges others to do our will.

ii. Public office usually carries with it a high salary and gives facilities for acquiring even more riches.

iii. It is accompanied by worldly honours.

(b) It is a very dangerous form of ambition. There are few who prepare themselves really well for public office, although sometimes it is necessary and a duty to accept it.

4. *Ambition for honours:*

(a) Strictly speaking, this sin consists in an inordinate desire for honours. So St Thomas defines it (2-2. q. 131. a. 1 and 2). This can happen in three ways:

i. When someone wishes to receive honour out of all proportion to his merits, being honoured for some good qualities which he does not possess.

ii. When one desires honours for himself alone, not referring them, as he should, to God. The good qualities we have come from God and should be returned to him.

iii. When the honour received is not used for others, but only for oneself.

(b) Honour widens the area of our personality; we are present, through it, to the minds of others and it is a recognition of our excellence. By honouring us others are, in some way, submitting themselves to us. This makes us 'somebody' in the eyes of the world.

i. Of itself, honour is not an evil. It may be the recognition of some virtue or good quality in us.

ii. As St Thomas says, for the virtuous man, honour will never be a sufficient reward for his virtue, eternal happiness being the only honour which can satisfy him.

5. *The ambition of the proud:*

This is the worst type of ambition. They pretend to despise honours, not through humility, but through their secret pride. They prefer the vainglory which comes to them from the fact that others admire the superiority of their spirit. That which they pretend to despise is really a pedestal for their own statue to stand on.

6. *The supreme ambition:*

To demand from others that supreme submission called adoration, which belongs to God alone. Those who aspire to divine honours are possessed by the very spirit of the devil himself.

7. *Remedies for ambition:*

Christ defended himself against this temptation with the aid of texts from Scripture. In all of them he turns to God's honour and glory. Man, with the aid of the shield of faith, can defend himself against this temptation, as the Epistle of today proves (Eph. 6. 16).

(a) By faith he judges the true value of things and refers them all to God;

(b) Meditation on the word of God is the secret; because it leads to humility when we think of what God is, of what we have from God and what we are and have of ourselves. True humility is the cure for all ambition.

H: The ambition of the saints

1. The saints are the most ambitious of men. The very phrases they use to give expression to their desires show this, e.g. St Paul, T can do all things'; St Ignatius, 'To conquer the whole world'.

2. *The negative principle:*

Yet they follow the opposite path to those who are ambitious in the worldly sense. They do not extend their own personality; they do not stress it. Rather, they deny it. Whenever they speak of themselves they minimize themselves, speaking of the 'least', 'Slave', 'Unworthy', 'servant of the servants of God'.

(a) The principle on which the saints work is negation.

(b) In this they only follow the Gospel: If any man has a mind to come my way let him renounce self (Luke 9. 23).

(c) The saints despise and tread under foot all that worldly ambition seeks; riches, honours, self-assertion.

3. *Why?*

Because by the destruction of self, by this killing of self love, this denying of their own wills, these saints prepare themselves to act under the influence of the infinite power of God. They approach God and become one with him. There is no worldly ambition in them because everything is governed by him who is the First Principle and the Last End. They act as his instruments. For this reason they are always the happiest of men, 'abounding in joy' (2 Cor. 7. 4).

4. *The close connection between power and happiness:*

That which most fascinates the ambitious is power; it is what they most desire, however small the actual power may be which is granted to them. St Augustine expounds this idea in his Book, *De Trinitate,* 1. 13. Happiness demands the power to accomplish that which one wills and to will what is right. If you cannot attain what you will then you cannot be satisfied. If you will that which is not right then your will is inordinate. Both prevent you from being

happy.... He concludes: Therefore he is truly happy who possesses that which he wills and wills nothing badly.

5. *The triumph of the saints:*

(a) The power of the saints is not external; it is interior, as is also their triumph. The victories are won over the 'old man', by conquering and destroying self.

(b) Sanctity demands that we give up ourselves, get out of ourselves. 'Let each one realize', says St Ignatius, 'that he will advance in the spiritual life in so far as he gives up self-love and self-seeking.'

(c) Fray Luis de Leon says much the same, directing his words to the Jews who desired a temporal kingdom, full of earthly riches and power:

i. You longed for a world which will perish; while the Scriptures promise heaven;

ii. you longed for and sought freedom for your bodies, a full life and a peaceful one; with which freedom the soul can still sene sin and vice. From these moral evils God has promised us freedom;

iii. you hoped to lord it over others, while God only promised you dominion over yourselves;

iv. God promised you his Son, who would place beneath your feet all that could truly harm you, bring you holy, immortal and glorious, into the land of life and into that peace which never ends.

I: The value of the soul

I. *The value of the soul in the third temptation:*

This temptation gives us the opportunity of treating the theme of the value of the soul, because in it the devil offers to Christ all the kingdoms of the world in exchange for his soul. To the devil, therefore, the soul is worth more than all these earthly possessions. Christ, in his reply, teaches us the same doctrine from a different point of view. The soul is, in fact, worth more than all these things.

2. *The soul is worth more than the whole world:*

Two things, poles apart, were created by God, the world of the spiritual, simple and indivisible on the one hand, and the material creation on the other.

(a) God has made two classes of beings, says St Augustine, one, very nearly nothing—matter; the other close to himself—the angels.

(b) As a combination of the two he has made man, body and soul.

(c) The material creation is transitory; the spiritual lives for ever. Riches, honours, pleasures, power, dominion, talents—all these will pass away. The world is nothing; the soul is everythin".

(d) We can usually judge the value of a thing by what it costs. The world cost God one word: It was his decree that fashioned them, his command that gave them birth (Ps. 148. 5-6). The souls of men cost him his blood and his very life.

(c) In this passage of the Gospels, when the devil tempted him, Christ refused to go on his knees; but, at the Last Supper, he did go on his knees before Judas when Satan had already entered into his heart, in a final attempt to save his soul.

3. *The supernatural worth of the soul:*

(a) To the natural value of the soul as a pure spirit must be added the supernatural value given to it by grace, by which it is made almost divine. Once God showed a soul in all the glory of its grace to St Mary Magdalen da Pazzi and we are told that she remained eight days in ecstasy because of what she had seen of its beauty.

(b) God gave himself for souls.

i. The soul was redeemed Not in earthly currency, silver or gold; it was paid in the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1. 18).

ii. So great was the price paid for the soul that it would even seem to be worth as much as God himself.

iii. To save it he became man and died.

iv. We have his own words in living proof of its value: For a man's soul what price can he high enough? (Matt. 16. 26).

v. As St Thomas says: One soul is worth more than the whole of created material nature put together.

4.

(a) The world accuses the saints of exaggeration, calling them foolish and imprudent; yet they are the only ones who have really appreciated to the full the true worth of the human soul. They alone have set things in their right order and proportion, first God, then the soul, then everything else. It is the world which is wrong and full of fools who are willing to sell their birthright for a dish of lentils—for some momentary pleasure, a few worthless honours or riches.

(b) Look at the crucifix. There is the value of your soul, painted for you in vivid colours. His arms are extended for you in pardon; his lips plead with you to save your soul. The day of salvation has come already (2 Cor. 6. 3).

J: Christ: victor over temptation

The redemption, a drama of liberation

The redemption is, at one and the same time, a work of mercy and of justice; the solemn and sublime drama of the victory of God over the devil. Nor is it merely a question of overcoming

Satan; here he is defeated in the same way and by the same means through which he appeared to have triumphed.

The First Act : the victory of Satan

We can examine the two acts of this drama, beginning with the first.

1. Satan approaches man, the head of the human race; through gluttony he awakens in him vanity and ambition.

2. The devil wins because the man gives his consent and, heedless of God's warning, disobeys, through pride.

Interval: the conditions for Christ's victory

1. God wishes to undo Satan's triumph by following step by step the very process of the fall; therefore he must also undo the evil effects produced by the devil's victory. On Calvary he will wipe them out and destroy death completely; he must also overcome the devil's temptations.

2. But, if the redemption is to be in accord with strict justice, then man, not God, must be the victor;

(a) because the devil had not fought and won against God, but against man, who had freely consented to his suggestions, thus giving the devil some right and power over man;

(b) because if, in the struggle, it were merely God who fought, then Satan, in his pride, would consider himself suppressed, but not justly defeated. 'Not without reason did the pride of the enemy vindicate his tyrannical right over those from whom he had achieved the voluntary abandonment of God's commands and obedience to his own. Therefore he would not have justly lost the power he had over men unless he had been conquered by one of those whom he had brought under subjection. If the divinity alone had fought for sinners the devil would not have been beaten by reason but by force' (St Leo the Great, *Ser.* 2. *de Nath.):,*

(c) if it is a man who fights for all men then it must be one who represents us all; because Adam was our head and in his sin we all sinned (Rom. 5. 12). Therefore, to be complete, the victory demands that Satan must be overcome by one who represents us all; otherwise the solidarity which frees us all would be lacking.

The Second Act : Christ's victory

Now we can approach the mountain of the temptations and contemplate the drama of the divine reconquest of man in its second act.

I. The devil tempts man again and this time he is beaten.

(a) This man is our Head:

i. because he is the God-man, by nature king of the human race;

ii. because we are born of him to the life of the soul, just as we are born of Adam to the life of the body: Their birth came, not from human stock, not from nature's will or man's, but from God (John i. 13).

(b) This man, our head, fights in our name and as our head. When the head fights so does the whole body. His whole life was a redemption; each step he took had a special value in his mission.

i. He overcomes for us who for us deigned to suffer hunger. He endured temptations to give us the victory (St Maximus, *Hom.* 2).

ii. Christ was tempted in order that the creature might not be overcome (St Augustine, *narr.y* Ps. 90; PL. 37, 1164). That in his victory we too might overcome (Ps. 60).

iii. He won the victory, not for himself, but for us, because it would not have been an extraordinary thing for the Son of God to be the victor. What is truly admirable is that he overcame as man and for us (St John Chrysostom, *Hom.* 13. *in Matth.*).

2. The devil is vanquished by the very arms, or perhaps better, by the opposite arms to those used by him in the first act of the drama.

(a) Then he approached with lies and seduction; now he is vanquished through prudence, justice and truth;

(b) he knew how to take advantage of the first movements of gluttony; he is defeated by a hunger kept in check;

(c) he led others to vanity; he is overcome by humility;

(d) he awakened pride; he is vanquished by despising the over-lordship of the world;

(e) he tried to make out that God was a liar; he is defeated by the word of God;

(f) he won through disobedience; Jesus remains faithful to the will of the Father;

(g) he obtained the rebellion of man against God; he is cast out by Jesus, who says that God alone should be adored.

The Epilogue to the drama

I. Just as Christ's victory over death has not freed us from the necessity of dying, so his defeat of the tempter has not freed us from temptation. However, just as his victory over death has given us the grace to rise again, so the second victory over temptation has brought us the strength to overcome.

(a) Wearing the armour of living faith, confident hope and burning charity, which our Redeemer has given us, we shall win. Take up all God's armour, then, so you will be able to stand your ground when the evil time comes, and be found still on your feet, when all the task is over (Eph. 6. 13).

(b) I was given a sting to distress my outward nature, an angel of Satan sent to rebuff me. Three times it made me entreat the Lord to rid me of it, but he told me, My grace is enough for thee; my strength finds full scope in thy weakness. More than ever, then, I delight to boast of the weaknesses that humiliate me, so that the strength of Christ may enshrine itself in me (2 Cor. 12. 6-8).

(c) Here we see temptation and its remedy, the grace merited and distributed by Christ, who was tempted so that he might help us in times of temptation (Heb. 12. 18).

2. Nowadays the devil is weaker in his attacks against us than he was before the redemption; we on the contrary, are stronger.

(a) This strength of ours is related to the humanity of Christ as effect to cause; by submitting to temptation he overcame Satan, subduing him by right, he as our head, we as his body.

(b) The more we become like Christ, humbling ourselves under temptation, the stronger we shall be and the more grace we shall receive to defeat our enemy. This humility consists in having no confidence whatever in ourselves, employing the same methods which Christ used and attributing the final victory to him.

(c) When we see Satan defeated we should cry out with joy: Thanks be to God who gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15. 57).

3. Stand firm then, my beloved brethren, immovable in your resolve, doing your full share continually in the task the Lord has given you, since you know that your labour in the Lord's service cannot be spent in vain *{ibid.).*

~Te need for mortification according to St Paul, because we have enemies to overcome

\e *example of Christ:*

In the Gospel of today we see Christ in the desert, giving l example of mortification. Later he will preach clearly this of self-denial as one of the fundamental points in his teaching: he said to all alike, If any man has a mind to come my way, aim renounce self, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. who tries to save his life will lose it; it is the man who loses his for my sake that will save it (Luke 9. 23-24).

b) Lent is a time set apart for special mortification and daily i liturgy urges this on us. Let us see the reasons why St Paul nsiders it necessary.

Penance is necessary:

(a) As a general principle St Paul lays it down that Those who elong to Christ have crucified nature, with all its passions, all its impulses. Since we live by the spirit, let the spirit be our rule of ife (Gal. 5. 24-25).

(b) Because this Christian asceticism is necessary in order to win the crown, having urged the Corinthians to fight, he thinks of his own struggle and adds: So do I not run my course like a man in doubt of his goal; I do not fight my battle like a man who wastes his blows on the air. I buffet my own body, and make it my slave, or I who have preached to others, may myself be rejected as worthless (i Cor. 9. 26-27).

(c) The main reasons he gives are these:

i. Because of the battle we have to wage against our enemies.

ii. Because of the supernatural end, which is above our natural powers; therefore we must bring into subjection all that is earthly in us; all that is purely material.

iii. We must put this end before everything else; even lawful things must be subordinated to it (Col. 3. 1-4; 1 Cor. 7. 29-31).

iv. It is necessary because we must imitate Jesus Christ, our head. He is the way—we must follow him (John 14. 6; 13. 15. Rom. 8. 8 if.).

v. It is necessary for the growth of the Church: I am glad of my sufferings on your behalf, as in this mortal frame of mine, I help to pay off the debt which the afflictions of Christ leave still to be paid, for the sake of his body, the Church (Col. 1. 24).

3. *It is necessary because of the consequences of original sin left in us:*

(a) The sin is forgiven and remitted entirely by baptism; its consequences remain with us until the grave; death, sufferings, ignorance and concupiscence. These have remained so that, in the spiritual life, we may grow ever stronger by fighting against them and thus advance in virtue and achieve a meritorious victory (St Thomas 3 q. 69. a. 3).

(b) This is the 'old man' of whom St Paul speaks so frequently (cf. Eph. 4. 22-44; Col. 3. 5-9).

4. *It is necessary because of personal sin:*

(a) These sins, by repetition, give rise to habits which, although not sins in themselves, nevertheless incline us to sin and must be subjected by constant mortification.

(b) The struggle against the devil and the world can only be won by mortification. These are external enemies who can be overcome by the same weapons, i.e. the arms of faith, justice, truth, the word of God, prayer, putting on the likeness of Christ (Eph. 6. 11). St Paul sums it up thus: We carry about continually in our bodies the dying state of Jesus, so that the living power of Jesus may be manifested in our bodies too. Always we, alive as we are, are being given up to death for Jesus sake, so that the living power of Jesus may be manifested in this mortal nature (2 Cor. 4. 10-11).

The Second Sunday of Lent

THE TRANSFIGURATION

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: i Thess. 4. 1-7. Gospel: Matt. 17. 1-9 (Mark 9. 1-8; Luke 9. 28-36)

Texts referring to glory

I. *The splendour of divine glory:*

See how the skies proclaim God's glory', how the vault of heaven betrays his craftsmanship. Ps. 18. 2.

The hills melt like wax at the presence of the Lord; at its Master's presence the whole earth shrinks away. Ps. 96. 5.

Such great beauty even creatures have, reason is well able to contemplate the Source from which these perfections came. Wis. 13. 5.

Flung away, when that day comes, idols of silver and gold they once made and worshipped; moles and bats all their worship now, as they slink into clefts of the hills, into rocky caverns, to hide themselves from the tenors of the Lord's coming, from this sublime majesty that daunts the earth. Isaias 2. 20-21.

And ever the same cry passed between them: Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God of hosts; all the earth is full of his glory. Isaias 6. 3.

2. *It shines forth in the Word and in his works:*

We had sight of his glory, glory such as belongs to the Father's only-begotten Son, full of grace and truth. John 1. 14.

I have exalted thy glory on earth, by achieving the task which thou gavest me to do; now, Father, do thou exalt me at thy own side, in that glory which I had with thee before the world began. John 17. 4-5.

This, Father, is my desire,that all those whom hast thou entrusted to me may be with me where I am, so as to see my glory, thy gift made to me, in that love which thou didst bestow upon me before the foundation of the world. John. 17. 24.

He is the true likeness of the God we cannot see; his is that first birth which precedes every act of creation. Col. 1. 15.

3. *Light and clarity of God:*

No longer wilt thou have the sun to shine by day, or the moon's beam to enlighten thee; the Lord shall be thy everlasting light, thy God shall be thy splendour. Isaias 60. 19.

In him was life and that life was the light of men. John 1. 4.

There is one who enlightens every soul born into the world; he was the true light. John 1. 9.

I am the light of the world, he said. He who follows me can never walk in darkness; he will possess the light which is life. John 8. 12. Cf. 2 Cor. 4. 6; Eph. 5. 8; 1 Thess. 5. 5; Heb. 6. 4.

4. *The glorified body:*

He will form this humbled body of ours anew, moulding it into the image of his glorified body, so effective is his power to make all things obey him. Phil. 3. 21; cf. Rom. 6. 9; 1 Cor. 15. 40 ff.

5. *The glory of God is the happiness of the saints:*

What is sown corruptible rises incorruptible. 1 Cor. 15. 43.

This light and momentary affliction brings with it a reward multiplied every way, loading us with every lasting glory, 2 Cor. 4. 17.

And now I have a charge to give to the presbyters in your company; I who am a presbyter like themselves, I who bear witness of Christ's sufferings, I, who have my part in that glory which will one day be revealed. . . . So, when the Prince of Shepherds makes himself known, your prize will be that crown of glory which cannot fade.... And God, the giver of all grace, who has called us to enjoy after a little suffering, his eternal glory in Christ Jesus ... 1 Peter 5. 1-10.

6. *The eternal happiness of the just:*

Then they will shine out, these just souls, unconquerable as the sparks that break out, now here, now there, among the stubble. Wis. 3. 7.

It is the just that will live for ever; the Lord has their recompense waiting for them, the most high God takes care of them. How glorious is that kingdom, how beautiful that crown, which the Lord will bestow on them. Wis. 5. 16 ff.

Many shall wake, that now lie sleeping in the dust of earth, some to enjoy life everlasting, some to be confronted for ever with their disgrace. Bright shall be the glory of wise counsellors, as the radiance of the sky above; starry-bright for ever their glory, who have taught many the right way. Dan. 12. 2-3.

Then, at last, the just will shine out, clear as the sun, in their Father's kingdom. Matt. 13. 43.

Then the King will say to those who are on his right hand, Come, you that have received a blessing from my Father, take possession of the kingdom which has been prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Matt. 25. 34.

You are distressed now; but one day I will see you again, and then your hearts will be glad; and your gladness will be one which nobody can take from you. John 16. 22. Cf. Luke 22. 30.

We are to share an inheritance that is incorruptible, inviolable, unfading. It is stored up for you in heaven, i Peter i. 4.

7. *The multitude of the chosen:*

.And then I saw a great multitude, past all counting, taken from all nations and tribes and people and languages. These stood before the throne in the Lamb's presence, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and cried with a loud voice.... They will not be hungry nor thirsty any more; no sun, no noonday heat, shall fall across their path. The Lamb, who dwells where the throne is, will be their shepherd, leading them out to the springs whose water is life; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Apoc. 7. 9-17.

For a description of heaven, cf. Apoc. 21. 9-15; 18-19, 22-27.

SECTION IL GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LITURGICAL

A: The Mass

It is made up of parts taken from other Masses, the reason being that, in the early days of the Church's history, there was no Mass on this Sunday because of the ordinations on the previous day. However, the various parts show a unity among themselves which is truly remarkable in the circumstances. The whole is an exhortation to a more purified and saintly life.

B: Epistle and Gospel

The Epistle is an exhortation to sanctify ourselves—the goal of the Christian life: This is our appeal to you in the name of the Lord Jesus. We gave you a pattern of how you ought to live so as to please God; live by that pattern and make more of it than ever. . . . What God asks of you is that you should sanctify yourselves (1 Thess. 4.1-3). The Gospel is that of the Transfiguration of Christ, a feast officially instituted in the fifteenth century but formerly celebrated with great pomp on this second Sunday of Lent. The message is the same as that of the Epistle, but in a different form. 'Hear ye him.' Christ's message is, at one and the same time, the goal of the Christian and the way he must travel to attain that end. There is an invisible transformation of the soul here below which will be followed later by a visible transformation in the glory of heaven.

C: The liturgical formula of our sanctification

The sublimity of the message taught by this Mass is obvious-nothing less than our sanctification. Are there still Christians who

think that sanctity is not for them ? The time has come to preach it in season and out of season, because the tepidity of many souls may be due to the fact that we do not put before them the high ideals which the Church teaches us in the liturgy of today. Ours is a great vocation, to transform ourselves into living images of Christ. The Church asks us for sacrifice and the cross, by means of which this change can alone take place in us.

II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

A: The Epistle: 1 Thess. 4. 1-7

1. *Occasion and argument:*

Before St Paul could consolidate his preaching in the important centre which was Thessalonica, the Jews, jealous of his success there, had forced him to abandon the area and the town. He had made many converts, but they were not sufficiently instructed as yet and many doubts troubled them. Accordingly, Paul sent them Timothy, his disciple, to finish their instruction, while he himself went to Corinth. After he had been there a few weeks he wrote to the Thessalonians to give them his news. This was the occasion of the first letter to those converts. It was written about the year 52 a.d. Since his readers had been in the true Church about a year only, it is not surprising that they should still retain some of their vices, inherited from paganism, especially impurity and avarice. With both of these this part of the Epistle deals in a masterly fashion.

2. *The text:*

(a) This is what we ask:

The idea of this verse is that his converts should live ever more intensely according to the pattern of life which he had already laid before them.

(b) You have not forgotten the \varnings:

Later he will talk to them about their difficulties concerning the end of the world and the resurrection of the dead. Now he limits himself to reminding them of the precepts he gave them in the name of the Lord Jesus.

(c) What God asks of you is:

God asks of all Christians one thing, sanctity of life. This was so well known to the early Christians that they often spoke of themselves as 'the saints'. St Paul uses the phrase in many of his epistles.

The world may think what it will; but this is the only real end of man, the most important part of the work of God and of the redemption. There was a strong contrast between this idea and those of the pagan world of the day; but there is no less a contrast between it and our own civilization which pretends to be a Christian one.

The process of acquiring sanctity does not concern itself exclusively with such things as fornication (impurity in general), and avarice; but a warning about these two was necessary in the case of these Thessalonians, because indulgence in these vices could easily have led them to fall back into the paganism from which they came. The fornication to which St Paul refers includes all acts and thoughts against purity, especially adultery'.

(d) Each one of you must learn:

This is a difficult verse because of the varied readings. Nacar-Colunga translates it: let each one have his own wife in sanctity and honour, not yielding to passionate lust, as do the heathens, who know not God. Commentators are divided about the exact meaning of the Greek text; some taking it to mean: acquire or gain possession (control) of his own body, others to acquire (i.e. marry) his own wife. Perhaps the best reading is: let each one have his own wife and acquire his possessions in sanctity' and honour, not with passion, as do the gentiles who know not God. Those who know God should act in a very different fashion from those who do not know Him. Here St Paul attributes the worst vices to ignorance of God, at least, of the true God.

(e) None of you is to be exorbitant:

The Vulgate translates this verse: that no man overreach, nor circumvent his brother in business; which translation seems to fit in better with the translation of the previous verses.

(f) For all such wrong-doing God exacts punishment:

St Paul goes on to explain the two motives which should turn Christians away from dishonesty and immorality, namely, the judgement of God and their vocation to sanctity.

The former must have been a frequent theme in his preaching at Thessalonica, because from the rest of the Epistle we know that they had doubts and difficulties about the second coming of Christ as their judge. The second motive is included in verse 7. The life to which God has called us is not one of incontinence, it is a life of holiness.

3. *Applications:*

The preacher can develop the ideas of St Paul with regard to impurity' and avarice; but here we would like to call his attention to another aspect of this question, i.e. the antithesis between the Christian ideal and the pagan. The former can be summed up in one word—sanctity. The pagan is dominated by two main vices, avarice and impurity. A glance at the percentage of people who fulfil the obligation of Sunday Mass makes us wonder if that half hour dedicated to God once a week is sufficient to comply with this high vocation. Will there not be many more half hours when they are

given over to impurity or avarice? There is no need for us to go any further into the world of literature, art, or pornographic magazines, all of which are to be found in abundance in our civilization. Is this the Christian ideal in actual practice?

B: The Gospel: Matt. 17. 1-9

1. *The facts:*

The Fathers saw at once the connection between the scene in Caesarea, when Christ conferred on Peter the primacy and then announced his coming Passion, and the scene six days later on Tabor.

A long standing interpretation refers to the transfiguration the words with which St Mark closes the first episode (Mark 8. 39): 'Believe me, there are those standing here who will not taste of death before they have seen the kingdom of God present in all its power.' However, the more modern interpretation of these words understands them of the fall of Jerusalem and the miraculous spreading of the Gospel. In any case the Apostles needed this stimulus, because the future Passion would demand a well-grounded faith; what is more, the Messianic idea would not have been perfect if it had only set forth a crucified Saviour.

2. *Place:*

(a) The Evangelists merely say 'a high mountain', but tradition points to either Mt Hermon or Tabor, the latter being the more constant and ancient, going back as it does to St Jerome and Origen. This mountain rises in the midst of a plain to 1,000 feet above sea level, about two or three days' direct journey from Caesarea and south-east of Nazareth. There is a splendid view from its flat top, taking in the heights of Hermon and Mt Carmel on the one hand and the Sea of Galilee, the plains of Samaria, and the Mediterranean on the other.

(b) The text:

This passage of the Gospels is made up of three episodes, the transfiguration, the appearance of Moses and Elias and the testimony of the Father. The impression it made on the three Apostles must have been very great, because not only is it recorded by three Evangelists but also St Peter, many years later, appeals to this testimony of the Father which he himself had heard on the high mountain (cf. 2 Peter 1. 18).

3. *The transfiguration:*

(a) Six days afterwards:

St Luke says eight (Luke 9.28), but this merely means about a week.

(b) Jesus took Peter and James and his brother John:

These three were admitted into the intimacy of his glory, but afterwards they were to see his humiliation more closely, especially

in the Garden. The Lord needed witnesses to his glory who could encourage the rest during the dark days of the Passion.

God distributes his extraordinary graces how and when and to whom he pleases. They are not necessarily a sign of greater sanctity; we should not envy those who have them, rather we should envy those who have greater charity and sanctity. The degree of sanctifying grace is what really matters, not these extraordinary ones.

(c) He led them up to a high mountain:

To see God one must go apart from creatures.

(d) And even as he prayed:

Prayer is not merely the only method we have at our disposal for contemplating God, it also transfigures the soul, giving it the graces necessary to free it from the stains of sin, to suffer temptation and overcome difficulties; it gives the soul the grace to see God more clearly and in him all other things, from which comes the grace to despise the world and its crosses, and union with God.

(e) He was transfigured in their presence:

It consisted exteriorly in a brightness which flowed like the purest light from his face and all the visible parts of his body. With the best manuscripts we should read: *white as light.*

From the theological point of view what happened? Certainly the Apostles did not see the Divinity of Christ, because that cannot be seen by the eyes of the body. Perhaps they saw the glory of his sacred Humanity, normally hidden too; or even perhaps the brightness proper to a glorified body.

4. *Moses and Elias:*

(a) and all at once they had sight of Moses and Elias:

Why these two precisely? They were the two great figures of the Old Law, one representing the law and the other the prophets.

Ideas the Apostles had about the Messias needed clarifying

ese were the two who could do it. Besides, they had merited this honour, because both had been like Christ in their care for the people

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the Passion. It was necessary that the prophets of the Old Testament should make it clear that they had demanded thc death of the Messias for the liberation of thc people.

(c) Then Peter said aloud to Jesus:

Peter never found it easy to keep quiet, either in the case of his profession of faith, or in his quick, easy promises, or—in denying his Lord! As St Thomas of Villanova says: O Peter, it is first of all necessary that you should work and should be crucified; otherwise you will be of no use to thc world or to yourself. What! Would you hide the light? Then thc Lord would not do that which he had come to do. You do not understand the things that are of God. You neither wish for the salvation of the world neither do you desire the glory of the Lord. The love which you have forces you to speak like this, but the honour of the king loves justice (Serm. 2 Sunday of Lent).

5. *The testimony of the Father:*

(a) a shining cloud overshadowed them . . .

This was a usual sign of God's presence (cf. Ex. 13. 21; 1 Kings 8. 10).

(b) This is my beloved son:

Again the definitive testimony of the Father, already given at the moment of Christ's baptism (Matt. 3. 17). This is the Son of God and he is 'beloved', a phrase which is equivalent to 'only son'. The love of the Father for the Son extends to us, because he sees in us the image of his Son, our redeemer, planted in us by the gift of sanctifying grace which makes us adopted sons of God.

'To him, then, listen'—it is a command. Christ does not come like other teachers, who try to convince us of the truth of their message by arguments. He demands faith in his word. This phrase is a warning to the Apostles and to us not to question the teachings of Christ.

(c) the disciples when they heard it:

They could not stand any more. The shock of seeing the human glory of Christ and hearing the words of the Father made them faint, but it was only for a time, since the words of God do not cause fear in the soul.

(d) and saw no man there:

The vision had gone and they were back to normal.

(e) and as they were coming down:

The vision is not to be spoken of until after the resurrection, presumably to avoid mistaken messianic enthusiasm. Now they must return with Christ to the usual tasks of healing, casting out devils, preaching and withstanding opposition. It is a picture of thc

active life joined to an occasional moment or two of contemplation and peace.

6. *Applications:*

Christ possessed three titles to the glory which shone from his body at the transfiguration; the hypostatic union, the beatific vision and the merits of his passion and death. In the last two we can share. On Tabor he let us see darkly and vaguely how great this glory' would be, but it is still as nothing compared to the glory of the soul. The purpose behind this miracle was to show his divinity and also his messianic character clearly to the Apostles, thus providing them with some measure of comfort in preparation for the dark days of the Passion.

The lesson for us is clear; heaven alone is sufficient reward for our efforts and it should inspire our resistance to the pleasures of this world and the sufferings we shall have to endure in order to attain it. In the light of this doctrine let us listen to St Paul when he says: You must be quit of the old self, and the habits that went with it; you must be clothed in the new self, that is being refitted all the time . . . (Col. 3. 9-10). When we meet with difficulties or persecutions we must make our own his words: Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? (Rom. 8. 35). To our shame, perhaps, Seneca has given us a lesson: I am too grand and my destiny is too great for me to become a slave of my senses (Ep. 65).

St Thomas of Villanova, addressing the world, says: 'Can you give me a like reward? What then is the payment you make to those who serve you? There are two conflicting teachers in our lives, one is Satan, whose doctrine leads to death; the other our Lord, whose teaching leads us to eternal life. Let us hear him.' His doctrine leads us to the transformation into immortality, by means of the transformation of our nature through grace, which is the seed of glory.

Man's first transformation consists in bringing his soul from the darkness of sin into the light of grace, making us like Christ. The second transformation is more difficult; it consists in the steady advance in grace and virtue, and few they are who aspire to it. Prayer and meditation are the means by which we attain it. According to the grade of grace will be the grade of our glory in heaven.

SECTION III. THE FATHERS

I. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

(The following paragraphs have been chosen, in which the holy doctor gives the motives for conversion to God in an attempt to redeem the sinner Theodore. PG. 26. 291-296.)

Speaking of heaven he says: There all is rest, joy and gladness; all is calm, serene, peace, glory and light. Nor is this light to be compared to that we enjoy here below, because the light of heaven knows no night, no heat or cold, no change. It is a state which only those can understand who arc worthy to receive it.

Open, then, the eyes of your soul and contemplate that spectacle of those who are more to be esteemed than precious stones and the rays of the sun or any material light or splendour; . . . and tell me, are we to deprive ourselves of these joys because we are not willing to suffer a little in this life? Even if it were necessary to suffer a million deaths every day, nay, even hell itself, in order to see Christ come in his glory and be numbered among the saints, would it not be worth all our sufferings? Listen to St Peter: 'Lord, it is well that we should be here.' If he, on seeing an obscure image of the glory to come, should, because of the pleasure he experienced, put aside all earthly desires, what shall we feel when we see the truth, when, the doors of the royal palace being opened, we shall contemplate the King himself, not in a glass, darkly, but face to face; not now by faith, but with our very eyes?

It does happen that many, unreasonably, would be quite content if they found themselves free from hell; but I say that not to find oneself in heaven is a more terrible punishment even than hell itself. He who has lost that glory will, I think, lament the loss of heaven more than he laments the torments of hell, because this is the worst suffering of all.

Let us contemplate those who, in this present life, enjoy the good things of this world, such as riches, honours and power. Captivated by their good fortune, they find it hard to believe that they are living on earth, and all this because they enjoy good things which are not really to be thought of as such, since they do not last; on the contrary, they vanish more quickly than dreams, and can only give pleasure in this present life, not being able to accompany us into the next world. If these things produce so much joy in those who possess them, what will be the situation, think you, of those who are called to the infinite delights of heaven, where they will be happy and safe for ever?... Now, like children still in their mother's womb, we are enclosed by this world and cannot understand the splendour and the freedom of the life to come; but when the moment of our birth arrives and the present world brings to the light of the day of judgement all those whom it has conceived, then its abortive sons will go from darkness to darkness, while those who are perfect, who retain the image of their king, will be presented to him and will receive as reward that ministry which the angels fulfil as homage to the God of all creation. . . .

We may not be able to change the ugliness of our bodies into beauty, but we can perfect the soul to the very limits of beauty,

even though it may have sunk to the extremes of ugliness. We can make it lovable and desirable, so that not only good men seek it, but also the King himself, according to those words of the Psalmist, speaking of this very beauty: Thy beaut}', now, is all for the king's delight (Ps. 44. 12).

II. ST BASIL

(St Basil speaks of the beaut}' of the Trinity, of which Tabor and the Transfiguration show us a glimpse. Cf. *defide. Hom.* 15 *ad pop.)*

Leaving behind all these created things, contemplate the divine nature, eternal being, unchangeable, free from affections, simple, not subject to composition, indivisible, inaccessible light, ineffable power, a grandeur unlimited, a most brilliant glory, goodness worthy of all desire, unequalled beaut}7 which wounds and impresses the soul so deeply that it cannot express in words such excellence.

There we see the Three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost.... The Father, principle of all things, cause of all that exists, the source of life. From him precedes the fount of all that is created, the wisdom, the power, the most perfect Image of the invisible God in all things, the Son, bom of the Father, God living in God. . . . 'We have sight of his glory', says St John, 'glory such as belongs to the only-begotten Son of the Father.' These wonders have not been given to him as a gift or bounty7; rather, the Son has the paternal divine power by reason of his common nature with the Father. To receive is a thing common to creatures; to possess by nature is proper to the only-begotten Son.

The soul, purified from earthly affections ... will understand that, where the Son and the Father are, there too is the Holy Ghost, who possesses all things by his very nature, goodness, rectitude, sanctity of life. ... He it is who gives life to the angels and archangels, sanctifies the powers, makes all things five. Poured out on all, each in a different way partakes of him, yet he is not diminished by those who share in him, while they are filled with him and he lacks for nothing. Just as the sun, shining on all things alike, makes them all share in some way in its light without loss to itself, so the Holy Spirit, sharing out his graces to all, remains whole and undivided.

To all he gives light to understand and attain to the knowledge of God; he inspires the prophets, teaches wisdom to rulers, consecrates priests, strengthens kings, perfects the just, honours the prudent, gives the gift of healing, brings the dead to life, frees the captives, adopts strangers as sons. All this he does by a supernatural re-birth. He won over the publican, making him an evangelist; he came down on the fisherman, making him a theologian; he went in search of the persecutor, converting him to be an apostle

to the Gentiles, preacher of the faith and a vessel of election. By him the weak are made strong, the poor become rich, the ignorant wiser than the learned.

Paul was infirm, yet he brought back health to those who received him; Peter was also weak in body, yet his shadow, by the grace of the Spirit dwelling in him, drove the sickness from those on whom it fell... John never knew this world's learning, yet, by the Spirit he brought forth words which no human learning can understand.

If the power of God has not strengthened us beforehand, if we have not received the adoption of sons, we cannot resist the fiery darts of the enemy and all our efforts will be in vain . . .

Therefore, he who wishes to share in the divine glory and reflect, as a clear mirror, the form of Christ in his soul, must first of all ask day and night, with insatiable love, with the whole of that intensity of which his heart is capable, that help of the divine power whose force is denied to the man who has not uprooted from him the softness of human pleasures and earthly desires. . . .

The disobedience of the flesh reduces us to slavery; making us incapable of attaining that region of beauty and of light; leading us rather to the waters of Babylon, on whose banks we are still seated. Captives in Egypt, we have not yet looked on that land of promise, flowing with milk and honey. . .

If I do not overcome all my enemies, if I do not defeat all who oppose me, I shall never enter into the holy of holies and enjoy the divine glory. Make sure, then, that you become an unspotted son of God and you will enter into that rest into which Christ entered first as our herald. Make sure that your name is written down as a first-born of the heavenly Church and you will find yourself seated on the right hand of the Most High.

III. ST AUGUSTINE

(We shall give a selection of passages in which St Augustine deals with the theme of God, the last end of man. Cf. Commentary on ist Sunday after the Epiphany.)

St Augustine's first principle is that God is man's supreme happiness. He proves this by stages:

1. *The object of happiness:*

We all certainly desire to live happily; and there is no human being but assents to this statement almost before it is made. ... I find, then, a fourth case where the happiness of which we have been speaking exists, namely, when that which is man's chief good is both loved and possessed. For what do we call enjoyment but having at hand that which is loved ? And no one can be happy who does not enjoy that which is man's chief good, nor is there anyone who enjoys

this who is not happy. We must then possess our chief good if we are to think of living happily. . . .

2. *Happiness consists in the perfection of the soul:*

After pointing out that man's chief good must be something which is superior to man and something which cannot be lost against man's will, he then goes on to indicate that this supreme good is God: No one will question that virtue gives perfection to the soul. But it is a ven- proper subject of inquiry whether this virtue can exist by itself or only in the soul. . . . If the soul follows after itself in the pursuit of virtue it follows after a foolish thing; for before obtaining virtue it is foolish. . . . Either therefore virtue exists beyond the soul ... or we must allow that the soul follows after something else in order that virtue may be produced in it.

3. *God is man's supreme happiness:*

God then, remains, in following after whom we live both well and happily. . . . Let us see how the Lord himself in the Gospel has taught us to live; how too Paul, the Apostle . . . Let us hear, O Christ, what chief end thou dost prescribe to us; and that is obviously the chief end after which we are told to strive with supreme affection. 'Thou shaft love', he says, 'the Lord thy God.' Tell me also, I pray, what must be the measure of love; for I fear lest the desire enkindled in my heart should either exceed or tall short in fervour. 'With all thy heart', he says. Nor is that enough. 'With all thy soul.' Nor is it enough yet, 'With all thy mind'. . . . We have heard, then, what and how much we should love; this we must strive after, and to this we must refer all our plans. The perfection of all our good things and our perfect good is God. We must neither come short of this nor go beyond it: the one is dangerous, the other impossible.

4. *Happiness demands that it should be unending, eternal:*

'Too late did I love thee, a beauty so ancient and yet so new.' Too late did 1 love thee. For behold thou wert within and I without, and there did I seek thee; I unlovely, rushed about heedlessly among the things of beauty thou has made. Thou wert with me, but 1 was not with thee. Those things kept me far from thee which, unless they were in thee, were not. . . . When 1 shall cleave to thee with all my being then in nothing shall I have pain or labour; and all my life shall be a real life, being wholly full of thee.

5. *Glory is the hope of the adopted sons of God:*

He gave a man to men because they could not see him any other way. He became man for men; as God he reserves himself for the gods. But am I speaking proudly? Listen to him: Gods you are, I myself have declared it (Ps. 81. 6). The divine adoption renews us,

changing us into sons *of* God. We arc just that, but at the moment only by faith and hope, not according to the reality.... We now believe what we do not yet see; but by remaining firm in our faith concerning that which we do not see, we shall see that which we believe. For that reason St John says to us: We are sons of God even now, and what we shall be hereafter has not been made known as yet (i John 3. 2). *(Enarr. in* Ps. 84. 10.)

What shall the good receive ?... I have told you that we shall be safe, we shall live unharmed, we shall enjoy life without pain, without hunger, thirst or any defect, with our eyes clean to see the light. All that I have told you, yet I have not told you the main thing. We shall see God, and that is such a great thing that in comparison with it all that has gone before is nothing.

6. *The joy of this world and the joy of God:*

What is the joy of this world ? To rejoice in evil, in stupidity, in ugliness, in deformity; that is the joy of this world ... it is evil. But God does not think like man, his thoughts are very different. We are his sons. How do we know that ? Because he died for us, he who was the only-begotten Son of God. He did not want to be alone who died alone. The only Son of God gave birth to other sons. Do you doubt that he will be willing to divide his goods who was not slow to share our evils ? Therefore rejoice in the Lord, not in this world: that is, rejoice in the truth, not in iniquity; in the hope of eternity, not in vanity. Know that, wherever you are, the Lord is near at hand.

IV. ST GREGORY THE GREAT

(The transfiguration was preceded and followed by predictions concerning the Passion. The Fathers take up this idea in order to show us that whatever sufferings we have to endure in this life, they are nothing compared to the glory of the life to come. That is the main theme of these passages of St Gregory, taken from *Serin, yj Hom. in Evang.* PL. 76; 1278.)

I. *The grandeur of glory:*

Were we to consider, beloved brethren, how great is that heaven which is promised us, our souls would despise everything that we find in this world, for, compared to the eternal, they are not joys but rather a burden and should be called death rather than life. The very daily defect of our corruption what is it but a slow death ? What tongue can explain or intellect comprehend the grandeur of the heavenly joys; to join with the angelic hosts, assisting with them at the throne of God's glory, to see him as he is, face to face; to see that light without limits, not to be tormented any more by the fear of death, but rather to enjoy the gift of immortality without end,

At the contemplation of such happiness as this the soul longs to find itself there, where it hopes to live for ever.

2. *The need for effort:*

But great rewards are not gained except with great labour. Therefore St Paul tells us: The athlete will win no crown if he does not observe the rules of the contest (2 Tim. 2. 5). Let the soul rejoice, then, in the wonder of the prize, but let it not shrink from sufferings and from effort.

3. *Renounce all things for the sake of glory:*

(a) Our own family ties:

Therefore the Supreme Truth says to us; and to all who would draw near him: if any man comes to me without hating his father and mother, and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yes, and his own life too, he can be no disciple of mine (Luke 14. 26). What a strange dilemma: Christ demands that we hate our wives and St Paul tells us that we must love them (Eph. 5. 25). Can we love and hate at one and the same time? But if we examine the sense of both precepts we shall be able to fulfil them both properly; loving those near to us by ties of blood and the flesh when we find that they are our friends, and not knowing them, hating them and separating ourselves from them when they are our enemies on the road laid down by the Lord. He is loved by means of hate who is not heeded when he tries to lead us into sin by his merely carnal knowledge.

(b) Renounce life itself:

But the Lord, in order to show us that this hate must not come from any bad will on our part, but rather from charity, goes on to say: Yes, and his own life too. We do hate our own souls when we do not give way to their carnal desires, when we oppose ourselves to their concupiscence and resist their appetites. And since, by despising them and going against them in this way we lead them to good, it can truly be said that we love them by means *of* hatred.

4. *Fasting and almsdeeds:*

The Lord says to us: A man cannot be my disciple unless he takes up his own cross, and follows me. There are two ways by which we can take up the cross of the Lord, either by chastising our body by means of fasting or by having compassion on our neighbour, considering his needs as ours also. He who has compassion on the needs of others has the cross in his heart. . . . It is necessary, then, to take up the cross, and what is more, to follow the Lord. We can do this by chastising the body through fasting and helping our neighbour for the love of God and to please him. He who does this simply from a worldly motive takes up the cross, it is true, but he does not follow our Lord.

5. *A plan to obtain this glory:*

(a) In his commentary on the words of St Luke (14. 28): 'consider if one of you has a mind to build a tower, does he not first sit down and count the cost that must be paid, if he is to have enough to finish it?' St Gregory points out that we, too, must have a carefully considered plan, if we wish to attain the glory of heaven: Earthly buildings differ from those of heaven, because to build the former it is necessary to save, but to construct the latter it is necessary to share our goods.

(b) We must ask pardon of God:

If before he gave us a comparison, that of the building of a tower, now he gives us another, that by thinking of small things we may rise to greater ones. The Gospel tells us: If a king is setting out to join battle with another king, does he not first sit down and deliberate whether with his army of ten thousand, he can meet the onset of one who has twenty thousand? If he cannot, then, while the other is still at a distance, he despatches envoys to ask for conditions of peace,. . . with what tears should we not ask pardon who, in that terrible day of judgement, must present ourselves before our king with such unequal forces, since our inferior condition, our weaknesses and our cause are so weak compared with him!

(c) by almsdeeds and prayer:

What must we do, then, beloved brethren, when we see that, with an army such as ours, we cannot oppose that of the Lord, which is double in size, except send an envoy while he is still at a distance and beg him for peace? It is said that he is at a distance because we do not yet see him as our judge. Let us send him our tears as an envoy, together with our works of mercy; let us offer on his altar sacrifices for expiation; recognizing that we cannot fight against him on the day of judgement. . . . The chief envoy we have for obtaining his pardon is that of the altar, offered with tears and fervour, since there he who rose from the dead to die no more suffers and dies for us, in the mystery of this sacrifice. As often as we offer it we reproduce his Passion for our pardon. . . .

From this fact, dear brethren, know with certainty how great is the value of the Mass in terms of pardon for our sins, when you see how great it is when offered for others in order to undo the chains which bind their bodies. . . .

6. *Final exhortation:*

Therefore, let him who can, abandon all things, and he who cannot do this, let him send an envoy while the king is still far off, and offer his tears, alms and sacrifices. . . . Wash away then with your tears the stains of sin, remove them with alms and expiate them with sacrifices. Hope in your redeemer and lift up your eyes to the eternal home.

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

V. ST LEO THE GREAT

(These extracts from Serm. 51 give the main ideas of the saint on this subject. Part of this sermon is read today and other parts of it on Ember Saturday. The applications are obvious and we should notice his Christology, his teaching on the Mystical Body and the final exhortation concerning the Redeemer.)

I. *The reasons for the transfiguration:*

(a) Heaven: an encouragement in times of suffering:

That the apostles might not tremble before the harshness of the cross nor be ashamed of the Passion of Christ; that they might not deem it an unworthy thing to suffer, since they would overcome torments and hardships in such a way as to gain heaven, Jesus took Peter, James, and John, his brother and, going up with them into a high mountain, he showed them there the splendour of his glory. They already believed in the majesty of God, but as yet they were ignorant of the power of the body beneath which that divinity lay hidden. . . . That ineffable and inaccessible vision of the godhead itself, reserved for those who are in the next life and are clean of heart, could not be seen and understood by men who were still in this mortal flesh.

(b) to avoid the scandal of the cross:

By means of this transfiguration he wished, above all, to remove from the hearts of the disciples the scandal of the cross, so that the voluntary ignominy of his passion would not cause their faith to weaken to whom he was going to reveal his hidden dignity.

(c) the hope of the Mystical Body:

No less providentially was the hope of the holy Church deeper rooted by the knowledge of the transformation which would grace the (mystical) body of Christ, since each member may promise himself a like glory to that which shone forth in the head. This had already been foretold by Christ the Lord when he said; speaking of the majesty of his coming: Then; at last, the just will shine out, clear as the sun, in their Father's kingdom (Matt. 13. 43); and St Paul confirms it when he says: Not that I count these present sufferings as the measure of that glory which is to be revealed in us (Rom. 8.18), and in another place: Christ is your life, and when he is made manifest, you too will be made manifest in glory with him (Col. 3.4).

(d) suffer in order to reign:

This moved him (Peter) to exclaim: Lord, it is well for us to be here. If it pleases thee, let us make three arbours in this place, one for thee, one for Moses and one for Elias. But the Lord did not reply to this suggestion, thus indicating that, if not evil, at least it

was inordinate, since the world could not be saved except through the cross of Christ and that the faith of those who believe should accommodate itself to the example of Christ; that, without doubting the promises of future happiness, we should realize that we must ask for sufferings in this life rather than glory, since the happiness of reigning with him cannot precede the time of suffering.

2. *The testimony of the Father:*

This is my Son. The equality he has with me he has not attained by robbery or by usurpation, but, remaining in the same glory which I have, in order to accomplish the determination taken by both of us to redeem the human race, he lowered his divinity to the point of taking the form of a servant.

3. *Hear him:*

Listen, then, in firm faith to him in whom I am well pleased, in whose preaching I reveal myself and in whose humility I am glorified. He is the truth and the life; my very own power and wisdom. Hear him whom the secrets of the law revealed, who was proclaimed by the mouths of the prophets. Hear him who redeems the world by his blood, casts the devil in chains and destroys his power; who cancels the decree of sin. Hear him who makes easy the way to heaven and, by the torment of the cross, prepares the steps by which we rise to the kingdom. Why are you fearful for your redemption? Why do you fear for your salvation? Do the will of Christ, which is mine also! Cast from you all carnal fears and clothe yourselves in faithful constancy. It is foolish to fear the passion of the Saviour when, because of his merits, you will not fear even death itself.

SECTION IV. THEOLOGIANS

I. ST THOMAS AQUINAS

(We shall limit ourselves to a summary of his doctrine under various headings.)

I. *The transfiguration:*

(fi) Christ was, at one and the same time, in enjoyment of the beatific vision and in the state of mortal men. Before his Passion he saw God clearly in his soul and under this aspect he possessed all happiness so far as the soul was concerned, but he did not have the other properties we have mentioned, because his soul could suffer, as could his mortal body. Therefore he was in the state of the blessed in so far as he possessed the beatitude proper to the soul, but he was still a wayfarer in those things which were still lacking to make that beatitude complete (3P. q. 15. a. 10. c).

(b) The brightness of Christ on Tabor:

1. This brightness came from the divinity and from the glory which filled his soul. Normally this glory was hidden through a special dispensation of providence, so that he would be able to accomplish, in his body, the needs of our redemption. He still had the power, however, to allow this glory to have its natural effect, and this power he used at the transfiguration (3P. q. 45. a. 2. c).

ii. However, this was the brightness of glory, not that of glorified bodies; Christ's body was as yet mortal, but it could still shine with the glory of the soul. This represented the perfection of glory which will be that of the glorified body (3P. q. 45. a. 2. *ad* i *et ad 2 1m).*

(c) Christ was transfigured to encourage the disciples to suffer:

Here St Thomas quotes St Bede: By his merciful providence he allowed them to enjoy, for a short time, the contemplation of that happiness which will last for ever, in order to make them capable of enduring adversity with fortitude (3P. q. 45. a. 1. c).

(d) The witnesses on Tabor signified the universal will of God to save all:

Christ came to bring salvation to all, to those who had lived before his coming and to those who would live after it. Therefore it was fitting that there should be witnesses taken from both sides (3P. q. 35. a. 3. c).

(e) They were not to tell the vision to anyone:

i. so that the cross might not come as a shock and a scandal to anyone;

ii. so that his death might not be prevented by the people;

iii. so that they might be witnesses to all these spiritual events only after they had received the Holy Ghost (3P. q. 45. a. 3. *ad* 410η).

2. *The happiness of heaven:*

(a) Happiness implies the full and complete possession of all good which will satisfy perfectly all one's desires (1-2. q. 3. a. 2 and 3). In the case of man it will consist in the most perfect operation of the soul which must be interior and immanent to the soul itself. The active principle of this operation must be the intellect, perfected by some habit, while its object must be the highest possible. The quality of the action must be perfect, easy, firm and delightful (cf. I. II. q. 3. a. 2. c; Cont. Gent. I. c. 100).

(b) The very essence of this beatitude is the vision of God:

i. This is an act of the intellect consisting in the most perfect knowledge of God possible to a creature (Cont. Gent. 3. c 25).

ii. It must be the vision of the divine essence. This St Thomas proves by two arguments taken together; («) that man cannot be perfectly happy while there is still something left for him to seek or desire; (/>) the perfection of any power of man is determined by the object of it (cf. I. II. q. 3. a. 8. c).

(c) The blessed see God face to face:

This supernatural intellectual vision is possible, not by means of any created species which represents God, for that is impossible, but by means of the divine essence acting itself as an object of the intellect. This is made possible by the light of glory, a gift of God which disposes the soul to see God as he is in himself. For this reason we say that the blessed see God face to face. This vision makes us like God, who sees and comprehends himself by his very essence (cf. *Cont. Gent.* 3. c. 51; c. 49; c. 52; c. 53).

(d) There are grades in this eternal happiness:

Not from the part of the object of the beatific vision, because that is the same for all who see God face to face—it is God himself; but from the part of the light of glory, which is shared in to a greater or a lesser degree by the blessed; for which reason some will see God more perfectly than others (cf. 2-2. q. 28. a 3. *ad 2um Cont. Gent.* 3. c. 59).

(e) To reach heaven we must achieve merits by doing good works, because man has an intellect and a free will which must co-operate in his salvation. The grade of glory we obtain will depend on these merits (cf. I. 1-2. q. 5. a 7. c.; 3P. q. 55. a. 1. *ad ÿum*. I. 1-2. q. 114. a. 3. c).

(f) Eternal happiness is complete and perfect, because once we reach it there will be nothing more to long for or desire, since we shall then possess the only perfect good and possess it completely. However, it will be greater in some than in others, depending on the merits of each and the grade of glory to which God has predestined each one (cf. 2-2 q. 28. a. 3, c *et ad 2um).*

Π. J. B. TERRIEN

I. *Properties of a glorified body:*

St Paul tells us that, as Christ is our head and our model in the order of grace, by the same title he is the first-born of the dead (Rom. 8. 29; i Cor. 15. 20). Even though he did not wish to show us the full glory of his body, a privilege reserved for the next life, before ascending into heaven he did allow us to see certain of its properties, and the Holy Ghost in the Scriptures has revealed, at least indirectly, the general outlines of that glory.

* From *Grace and Glory,* Vol. II.

(a) Impassibility:

We know that Christ, now he has risen from the dead, cannot die any more (Rom. 6. 9). We too, in his likeness, shall rise impervious to sufferings and death, What is sown corruptible, rises incorruptible . . . this corruptible nature of ours must be clothed with incorruptible life, this mortal nature with immortality (1 Cor. 15. 42; 53). Since there will be no more death, the consequences of mortality, i.e. sickness, pain, hunger and thirst, etc., will cease as well.

(b) Agility:

The risen body of Christ went in a moment from one place to another, overcoming the physical laws of gravity, distance, etc. From Emmaus to Jerusalem, from thence to Galilee, rising up to heaven ... Of our bodies also the Apostle says: What is sown in weakness is raised in power (1 Cor. 15. 43), absolutely free from anything that could hinder or retard their movements.

(c) Subtility:

The Lord's body passed through the stone of the tomb and the doors of the Cenacle as easily as the rays of the sun play through a window. Admirable subtility, like that of the pure spirits; wherefore interpreters say that it is included, at least implicitly, in the words of St Paul: What is sown a natural body, rises a spiritual body (1 Cor. 5. 43) *

(d) Brightness:

After the resurrection the Gospels make no mention of what is, perhaps, the most glorious property', that of brightness; but on Tabor our Lord showed himself bright as the sun. So far as our bodies are concerned, the Apostle says: What is sown unhonoured rises in glory (1 Cor. 15. 43). Look at Christ, hanging from the cross. It is the body in ignominy. Look at the serene brightness of the Lamb; it is the body in glory.

2. *The causes of these properties:*

(a) The efficient cause is God . . . the meritorious and exemplar cause is Christ. The immediate cause which produces them is the soul, a cause which is implied in the phrase we have just quoted: What is sown a natural body, rises a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15. 44). . . Man begins with the first Adam who became, as Scripture tells us, a living soul. It is fulfilled in the Adam who has become a life-giving spirit.. . after the resurrection the soul gives life to the body in such a way that it transmits to that body its properties.

* Many theologians, St Thomas among them, would not agree with this description of subtility. To St Thomas it means the complete subjection of the body to the soul, but this docs not mean that the latter will be able to pass through obstacles, except by a miracle (cf. Suppl. q. 83. a. i).

(b) A Testimony of St Augustine:

Let us listen to St Augustine: If we call carnal a soul subject to the rule of the flesh, it is only right that a body should be called spiritual which is entirely submissive to the rule of the spirit. Not that the flesh becomes a spirit, but because the spirit will exercise over it such a complete and wonderful dominion that it will banish for ever corruption and suffering. . . . The first man would not have died had he remained faithful to God, but he still would have needed food to sustain life; therefore his was still a natural body, not a spiritual one, because the spirit which animated it was not yet a living spirit. *(De Civ. Dei.* 13. 20 PL. 41. 393.)

3. *The Soul victorious over the body:*

What are sickness and death? Manifestations of the rebellion of the body against the soul. What is weight, which keeps us as it were, stuck to this earth ? A triumph of matter over our spiritual nature. Who does not know the stains and stigmas with which a rebellious body can render the soul hideous ? Once we are in heaven the soul will overcome the weakness of the body, carrying it through the air to meet Christ, conqueror of death, and giving it a celestial splendour.

SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. FRAY LUIS OF GRANADA

He outlines four reasons from which the magnificence of heaven may be judged.

1. *By its purpose, which is the glory of God:*

This is one of the circumstances which more easily reveal the condition and excellence of a thing. Well, the purpose for which the Lord made and furnished this place is the manifestation of his own glory . . . This Sovereign Lord determined to make a most solemn banquet in heaven which would last, not for the space of one hundred and eighty days, but for all eternity, to manifest in it the immensity of his riches, his wisdom, his loving-kindness and magnanimity.

2. *By the divine omnipotence:*

Tell me; if the power of this Lord is so great, so great too, the glory of his holy Name and so great his love, what will be the house, the feast and the banquet which he has prepared for this purpose ? What will be lacking from the perfection of this work ? There will be no lack, for he is all-powerful! lack of study, no,

♦ From *Guide for Sinners* and *Prayer and Aledration.*

because he is all-wisdom, Lick of desire, no, because he is infinitely good; there can be no lack of riches, because he has them all, a mighty ocean of them.

3. *To honour his saints:*

Tell me; if this Lord of ours is so grand in doing good, if his divine munificence has given, in this life, so many different things to his creatures for them to enjoy, if both the just and the unjust have common possession of the good things of this world, what good things will he have prepared for the just alone? He who has given so graciously of all his treasures to those to whom he owes nothing, what will he give to those to whom he is a debtor?

4. *The price God asks for it:*

We might also consider how great is the price which God asks for this glory, as liberal and munificent as he is. To grant us this gift he demanded nothing less after sin than the blood and the death of his only Son. . . . Tell me, if you can, what is that good like for which God had to sweat drops of blood, was forced to be made a prisoner, to be scourged, spat upon, buffetted, and nailed to a cross in order that you might be able to possess it? What is it that God has prepared for us, munificent as he is, at such a price? He who knows how to sound these depths will, I think, understand better by this method the grandeur of the glory of heaven than by any other.

H. FRAY LUIS DE LEON

I. *Intellectual knowledge, the cause of greater delight and joy:*

In men, those who are more sensitive appreciate better the things that give them joy and pleasure. If a man should have lost the sense of touch through illness or for some other reason, then even though he be cold and extend his hand to the fire, still, he does not obtain any pleasure from its warmth. . . . If this be so, who does not understand what a better and more delicate sense is that by which the joys of virtue are understood and felt, than any bodily one; because one is rational, the other merely a bodily sense; one penetrates to the very heart of the things it knows, while the other stops at the surface.

2. *The greatest of all, that contemplation by which God is possessed:*

If a beautiful picture, placed before the eyes, causes delight, if the ears rejoice in delicate harmonies and if sweetness pleases the sense of taste, it would be an insult to God to deny the joy and delight which fills the soul that possesses him. Because, if we consider, O Lord, what you are in yourself we find in you an ocean

* From 'Christ the Spouse' in *The Names of Christ.*

of goodness; the greatest good we have here below is but a drop compared with you and is as your vague shadow and image. If we think of what you mean to us, you are the desire of the soul, the only true goal of our lives, for whose possession we were created, in whom alone we find rest and whom we seek, even without knowing it, in all that we do.

3. *The perfect possession of this good will be possible only in heaven:*

Christ is your life, and when he is made manifest you, too, will be made manifest in glory with him (Col. 3. 4). Because Christ will have finished his task perfectly in those who are his when he shall have raised them up from the dust, immortal and glorious . .. Then his spirit and life will communicate itself to the highest part of the soul and to the lowest; from thence it will extend to the body, not only removing from it all vice, but also banishing weakness, clothing it entirely with him. The whole of its life, all its desires, its understanding, its pleasure and its glory will be Christ, who will then be perfectly one with his own while they will be complete and perfect sons of God, having in themselves, and living by, this God, who is the only Son of God, and who is the son of God in those whom God calls his sons.

III. ST TERESA OF AVILA

1. *The beauty of Christ in his glory:*

One year, on St Paul's Day, when I was at Mass, I saw a complete representation of this most sacred Humanity, as it were a picture of his resurrected Body, in very great beauty and majesty. ... I will only say that, if there were nothing else in heaven to delight the eyes but the extreme beauty of the glorified bodies there, that alone would be the greatest happiness. A most special happiness will be to see the humanity of Jesus Christ; for if it is so even on earth, where his Majesty reveals himself according to what we, in our wretchedness, can bear, what will it be like when the fruition of that joy is complete.

2. *Description of the glorious beauty of Christ:*

It is not a radiance which dazzles, but an infused glow and soft brightness which, without Wearying the eyes, causes them the greatest delight; nor are they wearied with the brightness they see in this divine beauty. So different from any earthly light is the brightness and light now revealed to the eyes that, by comparison with it, the brightness of our sun seems dim, so much so that we would never want to open our eyes to see it. . . .

For if what I see is an image, it is a living image—not a dead man, but the living Christ. And he shows me that he is both man

and God—not as he was in the tomb, but as he was when he came out from it, risen from the dead. Sometimes he comes with such majesty that no one can doubt that it is the Lord himself.. He reveals himself so completely as the Lord of that dwelling place, the soul, that it feels as though it were wholly dissolved and consumed in Christ.

3. *The effects of this beauty on the soul:*

(a) The fear of God:

Here is a clear picture of what the day of judgement will be, when we shall behold the majesty of the King and see his judgement in its rigour against evil men.

(b) Humility:

Here we find true humility, giving the soul the power to behold its own wretchedness, of which it cannot be ignorant.

(c) Repentance:

Here is shame and genuine repentance for sin; for, though it may see God revealing his love for it, still the soul can find no place wherein to hide itself and it is utterly confounded.

(d) Intense love:

The soul is now a new creature: it is continuously absorbed in God; it seems to me that a new and living love *of God* is beginning to work within it to a very high degree; for, though the former type of vision, which as I have said, reveals God without presenting any image of him, is of a higher kind, yet, if the memory of it is to last, despite our weakness, and if the thoughts are to be well occupied, it is a great thing that so divine a presence should be presented to the imagination . . . and in the other way which has been described it is revealed to us how he is God, and that he is powerful and can do all things and commands all things, and rules all things and fills all things with his love *(Life,* ch 28).

IV. ST JOHN OF THE CROSS

I. *The presence of God in the soul:*

There are three ways in which God can be present in *the soul:*

(a) The first is essential, and by this he is present, not only in the good and most holy souls, but also in those of evil men and sinners, together with all other creatures. By this presence God gives them being and life; were it to fail they would fall away into nothing and cease to be. This presence is never lacking in the souls of men.

(b) The second presence is by grace, by which God dwells in the soul, is pleased and satisfied with it. Not all enjoy this presence,

because those who fall into mortal sin lose it. The soul cannot know by any human means if it has this presence or not.

(c) The third is by spiritual affinity and love, because in the case of many souls, who are devout, God is accustomed to bring about some spiritual presences in many ways and with these he delights the soul, bringing it joy and happiness. However, like the others, these too arc hidden. God does not show himself as he is, because the conditions of this life do not permit it *(Spir. Cant.* c. 11. n. 3).

2. *The happiness at the sight of God brings with it the desire for death:*

The soul does little, really, in wishing to die at the sight of God's beauty, in order to enjoy it for ever; for if the soul had even a small idea of the greatness and the beauty of God, not only would it desire death in order to see that beauty for ever, but it would undergo a thousand bitter deaths to see it for one moment and, having seen it, would suffer as many again in order to see it once more *(ibid.* n. 7).

3. *The love of God desires his presence:*

The reason why the sickness of love is only cured by the presence and person of the Beloved is because the pain of love is entirely different from other pains even in its cure. In the case of other illnesses it is usually good philosophy to cure by contraries; in the case of love it is only to be cured by love itself.

The health of the soul is the love of God; thus . . . when the soul has no love for God it is dead; when it has even a tiny spark of love it is alive, but weak and sickly because of the small degree of love which it possesses; the more love it has the better it will be in health, and when that love is perfect then its health will also be perfect.

From all this it is clear that love will never reach perfection until those who love are so one that they are transformed one into the other *(ibid.* η. n-12).

4. *This union can only be reached imperfectly in this life:*

According to this likeness of transformation we may say that the life of the soul and that of Christ are one in union of love. This will be perfect in heaven, when the divine life will be in all those who have merited the grace to see God, because being transformed in God, they will live with the life of God, not with their own; yet with their own, because God's life will be theirs too. In this life, although it may be realized to some extent, as it was in the case of St Paul, still it will not be perfect, even though the soul may reach such a grade of union as the spiritual marriage, the highest state one can reach in this life, because all this is but a figure of the perfect transformation in glory *(ibid.* n. 12).

V. ST FRANCIS DE SALES

The accidental glory in heaven

I. *Difficulties:*

(a) The first difficulty is:

Can the blessed souls, separate from their bodies, see, hear, understand and consider. In a word, if they can have the ordinary functions of the body as if they were still united to it.

To this I reply that, not only can they have these, but more perfectly than before. Our intellect will see, consider and understand not only one thing at a time, but several; we shall be able to pay attention to several things without one prejudicing the others... The same thing will happen with the memory, which will recall various events to us without one interfering with the others. . ..

(b) Will the essential glory of heaven destroy other activities?

The abundance of consolation, says St Francis, will not deprive our souls of their freedom to have visions, to realize activities and movements; there the exercise of these faculties will not disturb our peace; rather they will perfect it so that one does no harm to the other.

(c) Will this multiplicity of acts diminish their intensity?

The multiplicity of things we have in the mind, the acts of the memory or desires in the will, does not imply that one will interfere with the other, or that one will be more understood than another. Why is this? Simply because everything will be made perfect and brought to its final state of consummation in heaven, which is eternal bliss.

2. *The glory of the conversation of the saints among themselves:*

Here St Francis points out that one of the joys of heaven will be this inter-communication between the blessed, which will include true exchange of ideas and conversation with the angels and with our blessed Lady. The main theme of these conversations will be this:

(a) They will talk about the mercies of God, by which they attained the happiness which they now enjoy;

(b) Of the Passion and the death of Christ:

If we could only understand something of the consolation of the blessed on speaking of this loving death, how our souls would delight in thinking about it!

He goes on to speak of that indescribable happiness when 'through the wound in the sacred side of our Lord Jesus Christ we

shall see the adorable heart of our Master burning with love for us, that heart in which we shall see our names written in letters of love'.

This conversation will be such that 'no man will be able to talk about it; it will be something so secret that no one can hear it save God and the one to whom God speaks. He will utter words so special and particular to each one of the blessed that there will be no others like them.' (Extracts taken from his sermon for the 2nd Sunday of Lent.)

VI. BOSSUET

(Here we shall give a summary of the ideas of a sermon preached on this Sunday, in which Bossuet speaks of the command to hear the words of Christ.)

1. *Hear Christ:*

This is the fundamental doctrine of the Gospels, therefore it need not surprise us to hear the Father say: This is my beloved Son ... to him, then, listen, because since he came on earth there is no longer room for human curiosity, but for obedience (Tertullian). He came to bring us his doctrine, his precepts and his promises; the first we must believe, the second practise and the third hope for. There are three obstacles in the way; the obscurity of faith, the roughness of the road which he teaches us, so contrary to the desires of the senses, and the fact that what he promises seems so far off. Here on Tabor the Father shows him to us as the supreme authority which should overcome these difficulties.

2. *Hear the doctrine:*

(a) Human testimony is fallible:

As Tertullian says, 'Where is the man of such prudence that he can show us what is truly good? Where is his authority to exact our obedience to it? In the former he is liable to err, in the second to be despised.'

(b) The testimony of Christ is infallible:

He will give us knowledge by faith first of all and then by vision; the present life is reserved for the paths of faith, in the future he will show us all things clearly. Meanwhile it is necessary to respect his authority and believe his word.

(c) The incontestable authority of Christ:

Listen to him in the Gospel: No man has ever seen God; but now his only-begotten son, who abides in the bosom of the Father, has himself become our interpreter (John 1. 18). As St Augustine says: It is no small knowledge to be united to one who knows; he had the eyes of perfect knowledge, you have those of faith *(Enarr. in*

Ps. 36, serm. 2, n. 2). It we do not see by our own light we have that of Christ, who directs us.

(d) The faith: sure criterion of truth:

Therefore, in the light of this doctrine, it is necessary for us to form our conclusions, not according to the light of reason or of human knowledge, but according to the truths of the Gospels. The best example of this is to be found in the Eucharist, where all the senses fail us or even deceive us—the ear alone can guide us to faith in his presence there.

3. *Hear the commands of Christ:*

(a) If you hear the doctrine ...

By means of your works, prove your faith : The man who claims knowledge of him without keeping his commandments is a liar (1 John 2.4). He may know him as a curious person does who is looking for some distraction; but not as a Christian, because Christ seeks faithful workers, not idle lookers-on, and faith is vain if it does not produce good works. The Scriptures give us a picture of the Christian life; it is like a building, the foundations of which are the faith, and you also know that foundations have a double purpose, that of being the beginning of a building and also the support for the rest of the edifice. Both demand that faith should be followed up by good works.

(b) We must persevere in the faith ...

Faith is the beginning because it is, as St x\ugustine says, the first thing which subjects the soul to God, but not to continue with good works is to stop after taking the first step and to be like the man in the Gospel: Is he to lay the foundation, and then find himself unable to finish the work, so that all who see it will fall to mocking him . . . (Luke 14. 29).

(c) The faith, foundation of the Christian life:

See how Christ joined the mysteries which he preached with the commands which he gave us! 'O Men', says St Augustine, 'do not love the world: here is the precept of the Lord, because if it were lovable the Son of God would have loved it: here is the mystery. Do not seek riches, because had they been necessary the Son of God would not have been poor. Do not fear sufferings . . . and thus you will learn that all things which Christ commanded are founded inexorably on that which he did.' . . .

There are many who draw near to him, not to hear him, but to make him speak things which are in accordance with their pleasure and the dictates of their passions and lusts: So rebellious a people is this, so treacherous a breed, refusing to listen to the law of their God; forbidding the prophet to prophesy, the man of vision to have vision of the truth. Ever they must be told what likes them

best, comforted in their illusions; for them no marching orders, no prescribed path; he, the Holy One of Israel, must be kept far from their view (Isaias 30. 9-10).

(d) We must submit to the demands of faith:

A thought of St Augustine will serve as summary for the whole of what has been said: Your best servant will be the man who looks to you, not to hear from you that which he wishes, but to desire that which he hears *(Confess.* 1. 10, c. 26).

SECTION VI. PAPAL TEXTS

To Him, then, listen

I. *The voice of the Church and the Pope: Obedience:*

(a) Christ has been appointed by the Father as the one foundation, the one guide who can enlighten our darkness:

With what gratitude and love we receive this guide whom God has given us, his Son, his Incarnate Word, who has come down to our dwelling place to be the one who enlightens every man born into the world (John 1. 9). With what confidence we allow ourselves to be guided by the Church, which he has made our maternal guide. Resting on her, we go on with firm steps, by the light of the faith, towards realities now invisible, but already possessed in the hope of future vision (Pius XII. To the Italian National Union of the Blind, 21 November 1945).

(b) Christ constituted his Church the pillar and foundation of truth; and for this reason the voice of Christ has its echo in that of the preachers of his Church. But to teach others to know the voice of God it is first of all necessary to have learned to listen to it (cf. Pius XII to the Lenten Preachers, 21 Feb. 1940).

2. *It is necessary to hear and obey the voice of the Pope and the Church:*

(a) It is contrary to Catholic doctrine to deny assent and obedience to the judgements of the Apostolic See (cf. Pius XI, *Quanta Cura).*

(b) We must maintain agreement of wills by obeying the Masters whom the Holy Spirit has appointed over us (Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei).*

(c) The obedience given to the Church has to be perfect and indivisible: This obedience has to be perfect, because the faith itself demands it, and it has this in common with the faith, that it must be indivisible, to such an extent that, if it be not absolutely and entirely perfect, it will have the appearance merely of obedience, without the reality (Leo XIII, *Sapientiae Christianae).*

(d) The Church founded by Christ is obeyed internally and externally by all who are moved by the Spirit of God: He who is

moved by rhe Spirit of God by this very fact observes an interior and exterior attitude of respect towards thc Church, noble fruit of the tree of the Cross, gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost to a world in need of a guide (Pius XI, *Mit Bren. Sorge).*

(e) It is necessary' to educate our youth to an adhesion to the Church of Christ and to pray that all may maintain an inflexible spirit of fidelity to the Redeemer and to the Church he founded:

Let suppliant prayer be made also that the loyalty we owe to our Divine Redeemer and to the society which he founded may be kept with steadfast mind and active will by all, and that the most sacred rights of the Church may be preserved inviolate against the snares, deceits and persecution of her enemies (Bull of Promulgation of the Holy Year, 1950).

(f) So as not to be ensnared by the angel of darkness it is necessary to love the Church, her sacraments and her practices: If we are not to be deceived by the angel of darkness, who is wont to 'transform himself into an angel of light', our supreme standard must be to love the Bride of Christ, such as Christ willed her to be, such as he purchased her with his own blood. Therefore we must love not only the sacraments with which our loving Mother Church nourishes us, not only the solemn feasts which she celebrates for our solace and joy . . . but we must also hold dear the sacramentals and the various practices of piety by which she fills the hearts of the faithful with the Spirit of Christ and with consolation . . . we must also reverence her Christ-given authority which "brings into captivity' every understanding unto the obedience of Christ". We are therefore bound to obey her laws and her moral precepts though their observance may sometimes be rather hard for our nature, fallen as it is from the state of its original innocence. . . . Nor is it enough to love this Mystical Body because it is distinguished by the divinity of its Head and by its heavenly endowments; we must also have a practical love for it as it manifests itself in this mortal flesh of ours, composed of frail human members, some of whom may be little worthy of the position which they hold in that venerable body *(Mystici Corporis,* 1943).

(g) We must not take pharisaical scandal at the frailty of the human element in the Church (ΛiζT *Bren. Sorge).*

3. *In the social sphere the Church possesses a clear well defined doctrine:*

(a) The Catholic has a positive social line of action, without need to borrow from any party or system, and this doctrine is equally removed from all extremes of error: 'It maintains a constant equilibrium of truth and justice, which it vindicates in theory and promotes in practice, bringing into harmony the rights and duties of all parties. Thus authority is reconciled with liberty, the dignity

of thc individual with that of thc State, thc human personality of the subject with thc obedience due to rulers as being thc representatives of God; thc well-ordered love of a man for himself, his family and country, with his love of other families and other peoples, founded on thc love of God, the Father of all, their first principle and last end' (Pius XI, *Divini Redemptoris,* 1937).

(b) This social doctrine of thc Church needs to be better known if we are to bring peace to a world disturbed on all sides. Above all, it must be recognized that the Church has a strict right to intervene in these social problems, since they are related in many ways to morals. But before proceeding to discuss these problems, We must lay down the principle long since clearly established by Pope Leo XIII, that it is our right and our duty to deal authoritatively with social and economic problems. It is not, of course, the office of the Church to lead men to transient and perishable happiness only . . . but she never can relinquish her God-given task of interposing her authority, not indeed in matters of technique, for which she has neither the equipment nor the mission, but in all those that fall under the moral law. With regard to these, the deposit of truth entrusted to us by God and our weighty7 office of declaring, interpreting and urging, in season and out of season, the entire moral law, demand that both the social order and economic life be brought within our supreme jurisdiction (Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno,* 1931).

4. *Tabor and the Cross: teaching of the Church:*

(a) The task of the Church in our day is made more difficult because of the hatreds, ambitions and divisions which assail the world: Even among Christians there are some who, under the weight of the daily sacrifices and trials of all kinds, in the midst of a world which is drifting away from faith and morals, or at least from fervour in faith and morality, are gradually losing that joy and spiritual vitality . . . without which the true feeling with and for the Church cannot long endure or maintain itself (Allocution on Vigil of Christmas, 1940).

(b) They wish to remain among the sweetness of Tabor, forgetful of the mystery of the Cross. They believe in the mystery of the Cross, but they forget to meditate on it and apply it to our own times. In the brightness and consoling hour on Tabor they feel themselves near to Christ, but in the dark and sad hours of Gethsemane they change all too easily into imitators of the sleeping disciples. And when earthly rulers make use of their extreme powers, just as the ministers of the Sanhedrin did with Jesus, they run away in cowardly flight, or, which comes to the same thing, they shirk from frank and brave resolutions *{ibid.).*

(c) To many who are deaf to her teaching the Church has preached the true doctrine, namely that, in many cases, pain is the most

effective of all teachers. In the concrete, in proclaiming her social programme, the Church has always made it clear that suffering must be the lot of man in this mortal life (Leo *XIII, Rerum Novarum).*

(d) It is only to deceive the people to promise them peace and glory without pain and suffering: 'If any are here who pretend differently—who hold out to a hard-pressed people the boon of freedom from pain and trouble, an undisturbed repose and constant enjoyment—they delude the people and impose on them, and their lying promises will one day bring forth worse evils than the present. Nothing is more useful than to look upon this world as it really is—and at the same time to seek elsewhere, as we have said, for the solace to its troubles' *(ibid.).*

SECTION VII. SERMON SCHEMES

I. LITURGICAL

A: Comfort in the struggle

1. Last Sunday the Church showed us the austere figure of Christ whom we have to imitate during Lent, so as not to allow the Apostle's exhortation to go unheeded: ❀we entreat you not to offer God's grace an ineffectual welcome?

2. A week has passed and the Church continues the journey towards Calvary. Today she gives us another incitement to follow Christ by presenting him to us, not in austerity, but in glory'. 'To him, then, listen,' she says to us, because 'what God asks of you is that you should sanctify yourselves' (i Thess. 4. 3).

3. On the 1st Sunday of Lent she shows us Christ, our model. Today the picture is that of Christ, our last end. Last Sunday faith moved us, today it is hope—the hope of being transformed into Christ. This transformation is two-fold, now in this life and later, in the next; but there is a connection between the two, because the former is an indispensable means of attaining the latter.

B: Our transformation into Christ in this life

1. It is God s will What God asks of you is that you should sanctify yourselves (1 Thess. 4. 3). In effecting this transformation it is first of all necessary to know Christ, to 'listen to him', by imitating his life.

2. This is the work of God m the soul; the Liturgv show's us this clearly.

(a) It begins at baptism:

All you who have been baptized in Christ's name have put on the person of Christ (Gal. 3. 27).

(b) It is increased and perfected by the Eucharist:

He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives continually in me and I in him (John 6. 57).

(c) All God's graces are directed towards effecting this transformation.

3. *Man's co-operation is necessary to achieve this end*

(a) This co-operation implies a knowledge of our own nothingness in God's sight:

i. *The Gradual insists on this idea :* Look on my miseries, O Lord, and on my labours and forgive me all my sins.

ii. *The same thought is in the collect :* O Lord who dost see us destitute of all power . . .

(b) Confident prayer and petition:

The tract indicates it: 'Visit us with thy grace'; and the collect: 'keep us within and without . .

(c) Love for God's commands:

'I will think constantly of thy law? This implies both love for, and the keeping of, God's commandments.

C: Anticipation of future glory

1. If we co-operate with God in this life we shall be as other Christs, a transformation which is an anticipation of the definitive one in heaven.

2. We can see the Transfiguration today on our altars; there is the glorified Christ of Tabor under the humble appearances of bread and wine. Each mass is a transformation and transfiguration which speaks to us of that change which awaits us in heaven.

3. From the altar the Father speaks to us again as he did on Tabor: 'to him, then, listen'. Follow him in his life of humiliation and suffering on earth so that, one day, you may see him transfigured in heaven and then you also will be transfigured with him.

II. THE GOSPEL

A: The Transfiguration

Historical exposition (cf. p. 67) : Considerations : the meaning of the transfiguration

I. *For the disciples:*

(a) Encouragement to suffer willingly. By his Passion Christ achieved glory both of soul and body.

(b) He leads all men towards this double glory if they will only follow him and not refuse to share in his passion. Therefore, after warning them of his coming passion, he was transfigured before

them. Encouraged by this hope of future glory, they will not be dismayed at the roughness of the road which leads to it.

2. For all:

(a) It increases our hope:

i. We see man's final end on Tabor; the glory of soul and body (cf. St Augustine, p. 73).

ii. iMortification is not an end in itself, but merely a means to an end: we mortify ourselves in order to have life: If you mortify the ways of nature through the power of the spirit you will have life (Rom. 8. 13).

iii. We should meditate on our Lord's glory, the object of our hope, in order to embrace the cross more eagerly: Not that I count these present sufferings as a measure of that glory which is to be revealed in us (Rom. 8. 18). In increasing our hope the transfiguration urges us once again to take up the cross. This hope eases the way to mortification, which is hard of itself, being contrary to the natural inclinations.

(b) It increases our charity:

i. Charity has God for its object and is directed towards Christ as God made man for us. If we penetrate deeply into his divinity our love will never waver. Love grows cold only when faith begins to diminish. The transfiguration increases both, by showing us the glory of Christ, a glory which speaks to us eloquently of heaven, and of God, who spoke to us on Tabor: This is my beloved son (Matt. 17. 5).

ii. Christ is lovable as man and as God; in his hidden life, in his death and in his glory on Tabor where his divinity is revealed. St Paul gives us an example of what this love means:

> He saw Christ on the road to Damascus, glorious and transfigured. Immediately he leaves everything else to follow Christ and to give himself up entirely to the love of Christ, a love which breaks out in a sublime canticle of praise: Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword?... of this I am fully persuaded, neither death nor life, nor angels or principalities or powers, neither what is present or what is to come, no force whatever, neither the heights above us or the depths beneath us, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which comes to us in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8. 35-39).

3. The Transfiguration urges us towards the cross: it encourages us, as a consequence of the increase in love which it effects in the soul, to take up the cross willingly. (Cf. the sufferings of St Paul in 2 Cor. ... 24-29.)

To sum up:

1. Tabor strengthens our hope, fires us with greater love and urges us to take up the cross and follow Christ (cf. St Leo, p. 78).

2. This is the glory which awaits us in heaven; but while we are still on this earth we must follow Christ in his passion. This is especially true during Lent, when we have to live those words of Christ: If any man has a mind to come my way, let him renounce self, and take up his cross, and follow me (Matt. 16. 24).

B: Tabor and Gethsemane

1. It is easy to see the relation between Tabor and Gethsemane; the transfiguration and the agony in the garden.

(a) In both cases Christ goes apart from the crowd, taking with him these three disciples.

(b) In both cases he prays while the disciples sleep (Luke 9. 29-32; 22. 45).

(c) In both cases there is a supernatural vision; on Tabor Moses and Elias; in Gethsemane the angel of the agony.

(d) On Tabor Christ is transfigured, showing us his glory; but he also becomes transfigured in the garden, in sweat and blood, flat on the ground in tears, in agony and fear, persecuted and humiliated. On Tabor his garments shine like the sun in brightness of glory; in Gethsemane they are stained with his blood.

2. *Peter's intervention:*

(a) On the night of the agony he speaks with rash boldness:

Though all else should lose courage over thee, I will never lose mine (Matt. 26. 33). I am ready to lay down my life for thy sake (John 13. 37).

(b) He also speaks imprudently on Tabor:

Lord, it is well that we should be here: if it please thee let us make three arbours in this place, one for thee, one for Moses and one for Elias (Matt. 17. 4).

(c) There is only one 'arbour':

As St Augustine says, commentating on these words of Peter. His general line of argument is this:

i. Three arbours—why three, when there is only one person here, Christ?

ii. Moses and Elias represent the Law and the Prophets, which had value only in so far as they prepared the way for Christ's coming and were an anticipation of the Gospel (cf. Paul to Gal. 3 ff.). The glory of Moses and Elias comes from Christ, through him they are immortal and glorified.

iii. The apostles, on their part, are a prolongation of Christ into the future for the sake of the world. They have a glorious

future before them on earth and in heaven, but both they receive as representatives of Christ and as his servants.

(d) Christ does want a tabernacle or arbour, it is true, but it is not the material one which Peter wants to build for him. He desires an arbour:

i. *In the minds of men and in their souls.* Therefore the words of the Father 'to him then, listen' mean—hear his words and keep them in your hearts. As St Paul says: So may the peace of Christ, the very condition of your calling as members of a single body, reign in your hearts (Col. 3. 15); and Peter himself will say later: Since you have all been born anew with an immortal, imperishable birth, through the word of God who lives and abides for ever (1 Pet. 1. 23).

ii. *We are changed into tabernacles:* wherein God dwells, because we receive the word of God, being born to a new life with God.

3. *The purposes of the Transfiguration (cf. St. Leo,* p. 78).

(a) Christ wanted:

i. to strengthen the faith of the disciples, especially that of Peter (Luke 22. 32). Peter would remind the faithful of this later (2 Peter 1. 16-20);
ii. to confirm their hope, showing them the glory to come;
iii. to prepare them for the Passion and for their own sufferings. The Father tells them to listen to his Son; he strengthens his Son's authority, with this in view, so that they should take him for their Teacher and Model.

(b) The Church puts this feast before us today with the same ideas in view: she reminds us of the glory which will one day be ours, but only if we are prepared to accept the cross of Christ. Remember that, just before the Transfiguration, Christ said: If any man has a mind to come my way; let him renounce himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. The man who tries to save his life shall lose it, it is the man who loses his life for my sake that will secure it. How is a man the better for it, if he gain the whole world at the cost of losing his own soul? For a man's soul what price can be high enough? (Matt. 16. 24-26).

4. *Practical conclusions from this Gospel:*

(a) an increase in austerity in our fives, especially during Lent;
(b) giving up or at least lessening our indulgence in pleasures (cinema, television, radio, light reading, etc.) during Lent;
(c) an increase in our almsdeeds and good works done for the poor;
(d) greater intensity in our spiritual lives (family Rosary);
(e) reading and meditation on the Passion of Christ;

(f) the way of the Cross;
(g) visits to the Blessed Sacrament with the idea of making reparation for the sins of others and for the coldness and indifference of many;
(h) keep in mind our future glory and the price which has to be paid for it here in the form of sufferings.

C: Tabernacle of Christ

Christ: tabernacle of the divinity

1. *The human nature of Christ is a shrine for his divinity:*

(a) In Christ the whole plenitude of the Deity is embodied and dwells in him (Col. 2. 9). God was not satisfied with the victims and sacrifices of the Old Law; he accepted them because they represented Christ, the real Victim for sin, his only Son, for whom he prepared a body, as a shrine (Lieb. 10. 5).

(b) Christ called himself tabernacle, or temple, announcing that his body would be destroyed and rebuilt in three days (John 2. 19-22).

2. *The body, risen in glory, is a glorious shrine for the Word of God:*

(a) By his resurrection Christ transforms the temple of his body, adorning it with the four properties of a glorified body.

(b) The destruction of the human temple of Christ and his glorious resurrection from death are both announced in this scene of the transfiguration.

i. Moses and Elias talk with him about his passion and death.
ii. On coming down from the mountain Christ mentioned his resurrection to the disciples: Do not tell anyone of what you have seen until the Son of man be risen from the dead (Matt. 17. 9).

(c) One day Peter will see the risen Lord and the true tabernacle of the divinity; he will see the properties of a glorified body and then they will be permanent, not transient like the glory of Tabor.

We are the temples of God

1. *Tabernacles of the divinity:*

(a) Christ, by his resurrection, would merit for us this privilege of being temples of the divinity;
(b) but he had to die first.

2. *Temples of the Holy Ghost:*

(a) Surely you know that your bodies are the shrines of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in you (1 Cor. 6. 19).

(b) Glorify God by making your bodies the shrines of his presence (1 Cor. 6. 20).

(c) Christ had already announced this; in the words of St John: . . . and then I will ask the Father and he will give you another to befriend vou, one who is to dwell continually with you for ever. It is the truth-giving Spirit, for whom the world can find no room, because it cannot see him, cannot recognize him. But you are to recognize him: he will be continually at your side, nay, he will be in you (John 14. 16-17).

2. *Tabernacles by the word:*

He who hears the words of God and keeps them merits the name of 'temple of God', for our Lord says: If a man has any love for me he will be true to my word: and then he will win my Father's love, and we will both come to him, and will make our continual abode with him (John 14. 23).

3. *But as yet our bodies are imperfect temples:*

Divine life dwells in them, but they are still 'bodies of death' as St Paul savs.

(a) Pitiable creature that I am, who is to set me free from a nature thus doomed to death (Rom. 7. 24).

(b) In 2 Corinthians he desires to be free from this mortal body;

(c) he rejoices when he sees it begin to disintegrate: Once this earthly tent-dwelling of ours has come to an end, God, we are sure, has a solid building waiting for us, a dwelling not made with hands, that will last eternally in heaven (2 Cor. 5. 1).

(d) Indeed, it is for this that we sigh, longing for the shelter of that home which heaven will give us (2 Cor. 5. 2).

(e) It is not because we would be stripped of something; rather we would clothe ourselves afresh; our mortal nature must be swallowed up in life (2 Cor. 5. 4).

The one road

The one road by which the glory of Christ will be able to manifest itself one day in our mortal bodies is the road of Calvary; i.e. we must give up our mortal flesh to the Passion, to the nails and to the cross of Christ: Always we, alive as we are, are being given up to death for Jesus' sake; so that the living power of Jesus may be manifested in this mortal nature of ours (2 Cor. 4. 11).

It is not enough to suffer; we must do so willingly in union with Christ.

The definitive reform

Once it is reformed our body will be a spiritual one, celestial, a 'new man': And if the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised up Jesus Christ from the dead will give life to your perishable bodies too, for the sake of the Spirit who dwells in you (Rom. 8. 11). He will form this humbled

body of ours anew, moulding it into the image of his glorified body, so effective is his power to make all things obey him (Phil. 3. 21).

Encouragement to suffer and labour

1. This light and momentary affliction brings with it a reward multiplied every way, loading us with everlasting glory; if only we will fix our eyes on what is unseen, not on what we can see. What we can sec lasts but for a moment; what is unseen is eternal (2 Cor. 4. 18).

2. From these profound truths we must obtain a more clear and well-defined view of the present life, joining present sufferings to future glory, knowing that, day by day, we are being made into ever more perfect temples of God, prepared for the eternal happiness of heaven.

D: This is my Son

1. *Sonship:*

(a) Essential requisites: birth and likeness in nature.

(b) To be a true son it is necessary:

i. that he should be of the same substance as the father;

ii. that he should be like his father, equal in nature to him;

iii. that birth itself should have given him these qualities;

iv. that he should take the place of his father when the latter is missing;

v. that he should communicate to others the power of his father.

2. *Only Christ is a Son in the perfect sense of the word:*

(a) He is of the same substance as the Father, born in such a perfect manner that he has one and the same nature as the Father: My Father and I are one (John 10. 30). Whosoever has seen me has seen the Father: what dost thou mean by saying, Let us see the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? (John 14. 10).

(b) Christ, in his two natures, manifests the Father; he is a voice making him known, a ray of light which discovers him, a testimony to him, his very image and portrait.

i. *As God:* he is: A Son who is the radiance of his Father's splendour, and the full expression of his being (Heb. 1. 3).

ii. *As man:* I have made thy name known to the men whom thou hast entrusted to me, chosen out of the world (John 17. 6). The Son cannot do anything at his own pleasure; what the Father does is what the Son does in his turn. The Father loves the Son, and discloses to him all that he himself does (John 5. 19-20). And then he lowered his own dignity, accepted an obedience which brought him to death on a cross (Phil. 2. 8).

The five births of Christ (from Fray Luis de Leon)

1. From all eternity in the bosom of the Father;

2. In time, from the womb of the Virgin Mary;

3. At his resurrection, when he was born again from the tomb;

4. In the host, at the command of his priests in the words of consecration at Mass;

5. He is born and grows in the souls of the just by the life of grace. We may enlarge on this last birth a little more:

Birth in the soul of the just:

(a) Christ is born in us when we receive his grace, because he comes to us with it and the spirit of Christ is soul of our soul.

(b) There are three distinct grades of this new life and birth; he is born and lives in the higher part of the soul; he lives in the lower part; he has dominion over the whole soul and body.

i. He begins his reign in the higher part of the soul, in what we may call its substance. He enlightens it, justifies it, renews it, puts it in order, infuses into it strength and health.

ii. *The second stage: (a)* As he grows in the soul he begins to take command of the lower part of it too, washing it clean with sufferings, frees it from its baser instincts, inclines it to leave the flesh-pots of Egypt and appreciate the poverty and the nakedness of the desert, where he will feed it with a heavenly food.

(/>) He mortifies everything carnal and vicious in this lower part of the soul and when that is done we are at peace: So may the peace of Christ, the very condition of your calling as members of a single body, reign in your hearts (Col. 3. 15).

(c) Then Christ is born perfectly in us: And yet I am alive; or rather, not I; it is Christ that lives in me (Gal. 2. 20).

iii. Christ will finish this task perfectly in all his chosen ones when they rise again from the dead, immortal and glorious. Then, from that fortress in the centre of the soul where Christ lived at the beginning of the fife of grace in us, he dominates perfectly the whole soul and body, removing, not merely its vices, but also its weaknesses as well.

E: Heaven and human activity

i. *A false accusation:*

(a) Frequently a false objection is brought against religion; that it destroys the vigour of peoples and individuals, making them useless for any worth-while earthly activity. This is based, of course, on a materialistic conception of life, because it accuses religion of promising a merely other-world happiness and of absorbing°people in this idea, to the exclusion of any others.

(b) The reality is completely contrary to this objection. True catholic doctrine has always avoided two extremes, quietism and disordered activity without supernatural foundation.

(c) The perfect balance is to be found in an unfolding of human activity under the constant control of grace and actuated by the thought of God and heaven as a motive for all activity.

2. *Its refutation:*

In today's Gospel:

(a) The transfiguration occurs when it is necessary to temper the souls of the Apostles for the tremendous fight of the passion.

(b) Therefore it has an end which is clearly active; to prepare the disciples to suffer persecution and for the voluntary offering of their lives for the salvation of the world.

In St Paul:

Paul wrote a paragraph in which he summarizes the true position of hope in the Christian life: We were to look forward, blessed in our hope, to the day when there will be a new dawn of glory, the glory of the great God, the glory of our Saviour Jesus Christ . . . (Tit. 2. 13).

(a) In hope:

i. The worker labours for his wages, the proprietor for his profits. To subtract the desire for reward from a man's life is not natural.

ii. Therefore the Church has condemned the opinion of some who said that it is possible to reach such a state of perfection in the spiritual life that the motive of spiritual reward must disappear.

iii. The natural desire for happiness makes us aspire to a reward, and this is the most accessible motive to inspire a man to greater activity, much more so when it is an infinite reward.

(b) To live:

The effect produced by this reward-motive is to make us live . . .

i. What does this word mean for St Paul? We have only to think of his life and we shall realize that it means tremendous activity. Perils from robbers, persecutors, storms, illness, scourgings, etc., meant nothing to Paul in comparison with the glory of heaven (Rom. 8. 18).

ii. To live for and in Christ—that is living for St Paul (Phil. 1. 21).

iii. Is Christ a model for useless and inactive persons?

(c) To live a life of order, of justice and of holiness . . .

Up to now we have spoken of the heaven-motive in the supernatural order. Does that mean that we must forget and forgo all

other activities in the purely material order? These words of St Paul give us the true answer to that objection. They appear at the end of a long message to Titus in which the Apostle tells his disciple what he is to preach to his congregation. This preaching should be a way of life for all classes of the Christian community; therefore we find counsels for the old people, for young married women; for the servants, who are warned that they should do their work well, be obedient and submissive to their masters and so on. We have only to read the whole paragraph to see that this is an active, social programme, for the benefit of the whole community.

3. *To sum up:*

First, when religion tells us to look towards heaven that does not mean that it forbids any earthly activity; what it does mean is that we must remove from that earthly activity all that is egoistic in it, all avarice or worldly ambition in the wrong sense of the word. The order in Christian activity then is this:

(a) God tells you to work so that by means of your labours you may gain heaven.

(b) In your labour do not look merely at the benefits you are going to get out of it for yourselves. If you do that you will render your efforts sterile and worthless spiritually;

(c) God does not tell you to forget the earth, but to render it fertile, to use it in order to get to heaven. Therefore, by your labours, seek the material good of those near and dear to you, your family, sons and daughters. Then work also for those to whom you are bound by social ties in the common good. The more you work from the motive of charity to help others the greater will your heaven be. How many saints have given their whole lives to alleviate the poverty they found around them!

Secondly, the thought of heaven should not remove all human initiative from us, quite the contrary', it should help to guide that initiative into the right channels—the common good of all here and hereafter.

F: Love and heaven

The happiness of heaven

I. *Love and life:*

(a) Man can do without many things, he can endure many kinds of suffering, but the one thing he cannot do without is love, love which alone can make him truly happy. The natural tendencies of man demonstrate this fact without need for further proof.

(b) Heaven is made up of three things, the vision of God, love and joy. We have already dealt with the vision of God (cf. Quinquagesima Sunday); here we shall say something about the other two elements, love and joy.

2. *Love, the cause of happiness:*

If love is the cause of happiness then there must be love in heaven.

(a) The will necessarily loves good, just as the intellect seeks truth, as its proper object.

(b) Just as there is no one who, interiorly at least, does not yield consent to evident truths, so there is no one who can refuse to love a thing which is good when he knows it to be free from all evil. This is what happens in heaven.

Love in heaven

1. *The vision of God face to face:*

(a) In heaven the souls of the blessed see God as the supreme good, both in himself and in relation to us.

(b) If the saints, even in this world of the senses, were so consumed with love that often they fainted and felt other effects of it, such as rapid beatings of the heart, which at times distended as in the case of St Philip Neri; what will be the feelings of the blessed in heaven, when they see God face to face and love him to the full extent of their being?

(c) If even now we love God in his creatures without knowing it, because whatever good we see in them is but a reflection of his, what will be our love when we see him revealed as he is?

2. *The perfection of love in the blessed:*

The love of the least of the souls in heaven will reach far beyond that of any saint on earth, no matter how great his or her sanctity may be. The reason: because the love in heaven is infinitely more perfect than earthly love.

(a) It is superior in perfection:

The love of charity lasts for ever, it is not like faith, which gives place to vision.

(b) It is superior in intensity:

i. Love depends on knowledge; the more we know about a person's goodness the more we love him. No one has known God on earth as we know him in heaven.

ii. No matter how saintly a person may be (and leaving aside the question of disordered inclinations) how many things there are which impede the freedom necessary to think about God all the time and love him without ceasing! The very fact that here we are in a mortal body means that we are hindered to some extent at least in our love. That will disappear in heaven.

(c) It is superior by reason of its immortality:

i. On earth there is always the danger of our defectibility—we can be led away from God, no matter how holy we may be, and follow after creatures.

ii. Here we cannot concentrate entirely on God, nor is our love for him always present before our eyes. A moment's carelessness and we can find ourselves seeking the good we see in creatures rather than that of God.

iii. Here we see God's goodness, but it is surrounded by enigmas and difficulties—we see as in a glass, darkly; we know him only partially. In heaven we shall see him and know him as he is.

iv. There will be no interruption in our acts of love in heaven. The causes of this interruption are our own defectibility and our human weakness—these will have disappeared in heaven.

Heaven is love eternal; just as hell is hate without any love to soften it. We shall love God as he loves himself in heaven. Let us not forget that God is love and that we shall be like God in heaven.

Joy in heaven

The Scriptures are full of metaphors to describe (or to attempt the description) of the joy of heaven. The most common one is that of a banquet held in a royal palace. St John describes it like this: Here is God's tabernacle, pitched among men; he will dwell with them and they will be his own people, and he will be among them, their own God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death, or mourning, or cries of distress, no more sorrow; those old things have passed away (Apoc. 2i. 3-4). But in reality all these metaphors merely indicate the impossibility of expressing in human language what that 'joy of the Lord ' implies.

What is this joy ?

Without going into details we may say that it is the possession of that happiness and good of which we have already spoken.

(a) I desire something while I do not yet possess it; when I do possess it I am happy; I am at rest. That happiness and that rest are the joy in heaven.

(b) We can see this in the material world in which we live: we long to know and to possess some object which we have heard is wonderful in its beauty; when we do know it and possess it we rejoice in it and are happy. The better the quality of the object the greater the joy in its possession. We see this in the question of food, for example. The more exquisite it is, the more it pleases the palate. The duration of the joy will depend to a great extent on the goodness of the object itself. If this beauty is not absolutely perfect then there comes a time when it tires us. Who can bear to listen to a piece of music all the time, or look at a wonderful picture or landscape for ever? That is the reason why every human pleasure has an end sometime or other.

In heaven

1. The anxiety or desire to know and to love will be entirely sated, because there we shall know infinite truth and love infinite beauty. There is no possibility of our ever being tired of it.

2. *It will last for ever:*

(a) We cannot lose heaven once we possess it; there is no chance of sin any longer entering into our lives.

(b) We shall never tire of that joy because we shall always find something new to know and love in that infinity which is God. The saints have found only one expression for this: heaven is a thirst which, however much it is quenched, never ceases (St Gregory Nazianzen).

Conclusion: why then should we be so bothered about earthly joys? Rather let us fix our minds on those of heaven and say with St Peter, Lord, it is well that we should be here (Matt. 17. 4).

G: Tabor: The scene on the heights and in the valley below

The scene in the valley

1. At the foot of the mountain the disciples were trying in vain to cast out the devil from a poor boy who was dumb. The devil made him foam at the mouth and gnash his teeth (Mark 9. 17).

2. The father of the lad had brought him to be cured: Master, I have brought my son to thee (Mark 9. 16), because, as St Luke tells us, he was his only son (Luke 9. 38).

3. Jesus told them to bring the boy to him. As soon as he came before the Lord we are told that the evil spirit Threw the boy into a convulsion, so that he fell on the ground, writhing and foaming at the mouth (Mark 9. 19).

Contrast between this scene and that on the top of the mountain

1. On the top of the mountain we find the peace of God, imposing and magnificent; the dazzling glory of his power and omnipotence; the wonderful delight of his presence revealed to men.

2. At the foot all is discord, affliction, sorrow, tears, impotence, struggle against illness and the danger of death.

3. On the top of the mountain all is united round the figure of Christ; at the foot of the mountain there is lack of all unity; nothing but division and strife:

(a) The disciples are disputing with the Scribes (Mark 9. 14).

(b) The devil torments the boy.

(c) He makes him writhe and tear himself, leaving him half dead.

This is the contrast between the heavenly Jerusalem and this valley of tears in which we have to live on earth.

Faith in Christ: the only cure for all ills

1. If the Lord is absent, says the Imitation, this life is a sad exile; If Christ is present, it is a sweet paradise. How sad is the life of the man who has no faith; impotent in the face of earthly evils and those attacks of the dexdl against mortal man.

2. But the misfortunes of this life can be our salvation, because they can lead us to Christ as they led the father of the boy possessed by the dumb devil.

The father of the sick boy

He merits our particular attention.

1. Here is a man who is upright, who loved his son deeply. He takes him to the apostles for them to heal him, and when this fails he goes to Christ.

2. He has not full faith in Jesus:

(a) He had the rudiments of faith only, we might say that he wanted to believe merely.

(b) Christ saw that his faith was weak; we can see these two things clearly in the conversation which passes between them: Come, have pity on us, and help us if thou canst. Jesus answers him with yet another condition: If thou canst believe, to him who believes all things are possible (Mark 9. 22).

(c) The man kneels down and breaks out into that sublime expression of his inner feelings: Lord, I do believe, succour my unbelief.

3. This beginning of faith and a desire to increase the faith had already convinced Jesus and were enough for him. He cast out the devil and restored the boy healed to his father.

4. How valuable is a mere good desire in the sight of the God of Mercy. As St Teresa says: Even in this life he has not failed to reward me for any of my good desires (*Life,* Ch. 4. n. 10).

Let us draw near to Christ

1. In our personal sorrows and collective tragedies let us seek help always from Christ.

2. Let us not have too much confidence in men; we must use them together with all the means at our disposal, to help ourselves· but let all our confidence be reserved for him.

3. Christ is always ready to help us; but he does ask a minimum on our part. A minimum of faith, of good intention, of action. As soon as we fly to him in humility of heart and simplicity he will do the rest.

The Importance of the Apostles

More is demanded from the souls who are called by God to administer spiritual power.

1. Those whose mission it is to bring peace to others must first of all have that peace themselves.

(a) Those who are intent on bringing about unity, whether social or individual, must first of all have that interior unity with Christ.

(b) They should avoid as far as lies in their power anything that may leave the soul 'half dead' (St Teresa).

(c) These souls have to go up to the top of the mountain with Christ, in meditation and contemplation, before they come down into the valley to attend to the needs of men.

2. *The lesson we receive from the Gospels:*

(a) The apostles asked our Lord the reason for their impotence when faced with this devil in the boy;

(b) Our Lord gave them the answer: Because you have no faith... because you are lacking in the spirit of prayer, fasting and penance (Matt. 17. 19-20).

H: With Christ through hope

Christ is our hope

1. *Hope has for its object:*

(f) the possession of God in the next life;

(b) the means to achieve it, which we expect to receive from the almighty God, because he has promised them;

(c) the object of our hope is eternal life, attained through the merits we can win, by God's grace.

2. *Christ has merited for us:*

(a) glory, opening the gates of heaven, shut by sin;

(b) all the graces which can lead us to that glory;

(c) the satisfaction offered by Christ on the Cross has won for us this double gift of grace and glory;

(d) the theological virtues are, in us, a reflection of the Trinity; Faith being attributed in a special way to the Father, Hope to the Son, who has opened heaven for us; and Charity to the Holy Spirit, the Love between the Father and the Son, who pours out God's charity on us.

3. *Because he suffered instead of us and in our nature:*

(a) Christ wished to found our hope on himself and his protection.

(b) He submitted to the sorrows and temptations of this life in order to show us that he cannot forget us now that he is in heaven, since he has had experience of our exile.

(c) We can claim a great high priest, and one who has passed right up through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God. It is not as if our high priest was incapable of feeling for us in our humiliations: he has been through ever,' trial, fashioned as we are, only sinless. Let us come boldly, then, before the throne of grace, to meet with mercy and win that grace which will help us in our needs (Heb. 4. 14-16).

4. *Because of the way in which he won our redemption:*

That is to say, incorporating us in himself, making us members of his mystical body in applying to us his redemption. This is the most solid of all the bases for hope.

(a) We are other Christs; he Eves, loves and merits in us.

(b) It is he who overcomes in us and he is our strength.

(c) All we need to do is to let him win the victory, putting no obstacles in the way ourselves.

(d) We shall be led to heaven by him who is our head, who has penetrated heaven's secrets before us, to prepare the way (Heb.

(e) For this reason the Apostle says: Christ among you, your hope of glory (Col. 1. 27).

Christ has left us abundant proofs of our hope

1. *He sent us his Spirit:*

(&) that we may know all the gifts of God which have been given to us (cf. i Cor. 2. 17 ff.);

(b) that the Spirit may pour out the love of God in our hearts, by means of which our hope is made sure (Rom. 5. 5).

2. *He has given us the Church:*

A continuation of Christ on earth; in her we shall find all that we need, including the means to attain heaven:

(a) his doctrine,

(b) his lawr,

(c) his sacraments,

(d) especially we have the teaching power of the Church, an infallible guide.

3. *His cross:*

(a) The Church sings of this cross; 'O wonderful cross, our one hope.'

(b) A share in that Cross is for us a pledge of hope, because we know that: We must share his sufferings, if we are to share his glory (Rom. 8. 17).

4. *His Eucharist:*

St Thomas calls it a pledge of future glory;

(a) Christ in the Blessed Sacrament is in our hearts a seed and pledge of glory and immortality;

(b) I am the bread of life:

Your fathers, who ate manna in the desert, died none the less; the bread which comes down from heaven is such that he who eats of it never dies. I myself am the living bread that has come down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he shall live for ever. And now, what is this bread which I am to give? It is my flesh, given for the life of the world. . . . The man who eats my flesh and drinks my blood enjoys eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day (John 6. 48-54).

5. *His Blessed Mother:*

(a) For us there can be no more sure pledge of our hope than the fact that we know our cause has been confided into the hands of a Mother.

(b) The Church calls her the Mother of holy hope, and we pray to her in the Hail, holy Queen—our life, our sweetness and our hope, to thee do we cry.

I: With Christ in prayer

Prayer transforms the sinner

1. The most radical transformation effected in man and the one which makes him most like Christ is that of sanctifying grace.

2. The sinner can attain grace through prayer; however, we should keep in mind the essential difference between merit and the prayer of petition:

(a) The sinner cannot merit:

i. He lacks sanctifying grace, source of all merit.

ii. Merit, which is a right to some reward, is in relation to divine justice, which has no obligations where the sinner is concerned.

(b) The sinner can and should plead:

i. Helped by actual grace the sinner can plead for the grace of conversion, and when he does so in the necessary condition, i.e. with piety, humility, and perseverance, he will attain the grace he asks for, not from the justice of God but through his mercy.

ii. The impetratory power of prayer does not imply sanctifying grace, therefore, no matter how deep in sin he may be, the sinner can and should ask for the grace he needs.

Prayer transforms the just

The prayer of the soul in a state of grace, whether it be the prayer of petition or meditation, transforms the soul with an ever increasing light. Grace increases, together with the virtues and the gifts, while the dominion of the spirit is consolidated. The prayer of the just attains this dominion for two reasons:

1. Because this prayer is meritorious, and therefore receives an increase of grace as a reward. What is more, it is rooted in the virtue of chants' from which it flows.

2. Because the prayer of the just is a plea, a supplication which is rewarded more than it deserves:

(a) God does not give himself according to the measure of the merits of the just man; prayer opens the gates of the soul, by which God enters.

i. He strips the soul of all affection for creatures, thus creating a vacuum which he alone can fill.

ii. He has promised us 'good measure, pressed down and over-flowing' in answer to our prayers. The Good Thief asked for just a memory—he received an eternal reward and, what is more, that very same day.

(b) The gift of final perseverance:

i. cannot be merited in strict justice; but it can be obtained infallibly through prayer, provided the right dispositions are there;

ii. that is to say, when the prayer is humble, confident, persevering and accompanied by the practice of virtue which increases grace;

iii. this is the constant teaching of the Fathers and theologians of the Church;

iv. it is the promise of Christ: Ask, and the gift will come; seek, and you shall find; knock and the door shall be opened to you (Matt. 7. 7);

v. for this reason the Church bids us pray: Holy Mar}7, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.

J: Transfigured by hope

Hope is the light of Christian asceticism

I. St Paul, on proposing to the Romans the picture of the virtues which should grace those who have been re-bom in Christ says· I

would see you ... buoyed up by hope (Rom. 12. 11-12). Therefore he bids them take courage and lift up their eyes towards heaven: May God, the author of all hope, fill you with all joy and peace in your believing; so that you may have hope in abundance, through the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15. 13).

2. St Augustine expresses it thus: The pilgrim needs hope. This is his consolation on the road. When the traveller feels tired of walking he puts up with the effort necessary to continue because he has hope of reaching the end of the journey. Take this hope away from him and he will no longer have the strength to walk. Therefore it is just that those who are travelling the road of this earth should have hope *(Serm.* 158. 8. PL. 38, 866).

3. *It transforms suffering into joy:*

Hope brings us, in anticipation, the future glory which will be ours through suffering (Rom. 8. 18); if it were not so, then God would not permit suffering and the Cross, as he does;

(a) because he cannot will evil for its own sake;

(b) Christ preached the happiness of those who suffer and weep, but at once he gives the reason; Weeping is the seed of consolation and persecution suffered for God leads us to heaven (Matt. 5. 5).

4. It is hope which maintains us in purity of life and prevents us from giving way to the baser inclinations of our passions.

5. *Hope transforms death itself:*

(a) The tomb surmounted by the cross becomes a place of rest for a time where the body awaits its future resurrection.

(b) This is the best consolation when we stand at the death bed of our loved ones.

(c) Make no mistake, brethren, about those who have gone to their rest; you are not to lament over them, as the rest of the world does, with no hope to live by. We believe, after all, that Jesus underwent death and rose again; just so, when Jesus comes back, God will bring back those who have found rest with him (1 Thess. 4. 12-13).

6. *Hope encourages us to be saints:*

(a) Because it tells us that the life of grace, invisible to the senses, is the seed of a future glory in which we will appear as we ought to be, the sons of God and heirs to a kingdom. The more like him we are by grace the greater will our glory be.

(b) Beloved, we are sons of God even now, and what we shall be hereafter has not been made known as yet. But we know that when he comes we shall be like him; we shall see him, then, as he is (1 John 3. 2).

Conclusion:

Let us give thanks to God for having left us this hope, a joy in the midst of so much unhappiness, a comfort and support amid the inconstancy of the world, an encouragement in the fight against our enemies. Blessed be that God, that Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy has begotten us anew, making hope live in us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. We are to share an inheritance that is incorruptible, inviolable, unfading. It is stored up for you in heaven (i Peter i. 3-4).

He says that hope *lives:*

(a) because it leads to that eternal life in heaven;

(b) because it does not deceive us, being true and certain, the anchor of the soul (Rom. 5. 5);

(c) because it never dies but remains with us (even in mortal sin), until it installs us in our rightful place in heaven.

The Third Sunday of Lent

THE CURE OF THE BLIND AND DUMB POSSESSED MAN

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: Ephesians 5. 1-9. Gospel: Luke 11. 14-28.
Cf. Matt. 12. 22-32, 43-45. Mark 3. 22-30.

Some texts concerning the devil and his fight against the kingdom of Christ:

1. *The father and prince of this world:*

He has not his like among the strong things of earth; that fearless nature, that heaven-confronting eye. Over all the pride of the earth he reigns supreme. Job 41. 24-25.

I will give thee all these if thou wilt fall down and adore me. Matt. 4. 9. Cf. Luke 4. 6.

Sentence is now being passed on this world; now is the time when the prince of this world is to be cast out. John 12. 31.

I have no longer much time for converse with you; one is coming who has power over the world, but no hold over me. John 14. 30.

About judging; he who rules this world has had sentence passed on him already. John 16. 11.

Those whose unbelieving minds have been blinded by the god this world worships, so that the glorious gospel of Christ, God's image, cannot reach them with the rays of its illumination. 2 Cor. 4. 4.

That was when you followed the fashion of this world, when you owned a prince whose domain is in the lower air, that spirit whose inflence is still at work among the unbelievers. Eph. 2. 2.

It is not against flesh and blood that we enter the lists; we have to do with princedoms and powers, with those who have mastery of the world in these dark days, with malign influences in an order higher than ours. Eph. 6. 12.

2. *His fight against the kingdom of God:*

Wherever a man hears the word by which the kingdom is preached but does not grasp it, the evil one comes and carries off what was sown in his heart: his was the wayside sowing. Matt. 13. 19. Cf. Mark 4. 15; Luke 8. 12.

You belong to your father, that is, the devil, and are eager to gratify the appetites which are your father's. He, from the first, was a murderer, and as for the truth, he has never taken his stand

upon that; there is no truth in him. When he utters falsehood, he is only uttering what is natural to him; he is all false, and it was he who gave falsehood its birth. John 8. 44.

I call you young men; have you not gained victory over the evil one? John 2. 13.

Before long the devil will throw some of you in prison, to have your faith tested there, and for ten days you shall be in sore distress. Keep faith with me to the point of death, and I will crown thee with life. Apoc. 2. 10.

And he was given power of speech, to boast and to blaspheme with, and freedom to work his will for a space of forty-two months. So he began to utter blasphemy against God, blasphemy against his name, against his dwelling place and all those who dwell in heaven. He was allowed too, to levy war at the saints and to triumph over them. The dominion given to him extended over all tribes and peoples and languages and races; all the dwellers on earth fell down in adoration of him, except those whose names the Lamb has written down in his book of life, the Lamb slain in sacrifice ever since the world was made. Apoc. 13. 5-8.

These are devilish spirits that can do miracles and find access to all the kings of the world, bidding them meet in battle when the great day comes, the day of almighty God. Apoc. 16. 14.

3. *A perpetual enemy of the reign of Christ:*

Be sober and watch well; the devil, who is your enemy, goes about roaring like a lion, to find his prey, but you, grounded in the faith, must face him boldly... 1 Peter 5. 8-9. Cf. 2 Cor. 6. 14; 12. 7; Eph. 6. ii; 1 Thess. 5. 5.

4. *His empire overthrown by Christ:*

And I will establish a feud between thee and the woman, between thy offspring and hers; she is to crush thy head, while thou dost lie in wait at her heels. Gen. 3. 15.

Yoke that fixed the burden, shaft that galled the shoulder, rod of the tyrant, all lie broken now, as they did long ago, when Madian fell. Isaias 9. 4.

Hard and heavy and strong that sword is which the Lord carries; shall he not wreak his vengeance, in due time, upon the monstrous serpent that bars the gate, and the monstrous serpent that coils up yonder; shall he not deal death to the great beast of the sea? And the praise of his doings shall be sung by his own vineyard, a vineyard rich in wine. Isaias 27. 1-2.

But to the accuser the divine answer came, The Lord rebuke thee, Satan; the Lord that makes choice of Jerusalem rebuke thee! What, is not this a brand saved from the embers? Zach. 3. 2.

He said to them: I watched, while Satan was cast down like a lightning flash from heaven. Luke 10. 18.

Thanking God our Father . . . for rescuing us from the power of darkness, and transferring us to the kingdom of his beloved Son. Col. i. 12-13.

By his death he would depose the prince of death, that is the devil; he would deliver those multitudes who lived all the while as slaves, made over to the fear of death. Heb. 2. 15.

The man who lives sinfully takes his character from the devil; the devil was a sinner from the first. If the Son of God was revealed to us, it was so that he might undo what the devil has done. 1 John 3. 8.

The great dragon, serpent of the primal age, was flung down to earth; he whom we call the devil, or Satan, the whole world's seducer, flung down to earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a voice crying aloud in heaven, The time has come; now we are saved and made strong, our God reigns, and power belongs to Christ, his anointed; the accuser of our brethren is overthrown. Apoc. 12. 9-10.

5. *He will be completely destroyed:*

Then he will say to those who are on his left hand, in their turn, Go far from me, you that are accursed, into that eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels. Matt. 25. 41.

Then it is that the rebel will show himself; and the Lord Jesus will destroy him with the breath of his mouth, overwhelming him with the brightness of his presence. He will come, when he comes, with all Satan's influence to aid him; there will be no lack of power, of counterfeit signs and wonders. 2 Thess. 2. 8-9.

The angels, too, who left the place assigned to them, instead of keeping their due order, he has imprisoned in eternal darkness, to await their judgement when the great day comes. Jude 6.

Cf. Apoc. 20. 1-10; 2 Peter 2. 4.

SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LITURGICAL

A: The Sunday of Scrutiny

According to Dom Guéranger, this Sunday used to be called the 'Sunday of the scrutinies'. These were the examinations previous to baptism which all the neophytes had to undergo. In Rome there were, at once time, seven of these examinations, the most important being that which was held on the Wednesday of the fourth week in Lent. The first took place on the Wednesday of the third week in Lent and was announced on this Sunday in the following terms to be found in the Gelasian Sacramentary: Dear brethren, you know that the day of the scrutiny draws near,

a day on which our chosen ones must receive the divine instruction· therefore be so good as to come together with zeal on that day of this week at the hour of sext, so that, without error, we may proceed with celestial mystery and open the gates of heaven, defeating the devil with all his works and pomps.

B: The Mass

In t[1] 's Mass the names of the persons to be baptized were given out and written on the diptychs, being read during the canon. To give the neophytes an example of what their future fidelity to the Church should mean to them the stational church was that of St Lawrence W ithout the Walls, founded by Constantine and later dedicated to the Blessed \ irgin—which fact probably accounts for the Gospel chosen for today.

C: The Epistle and Gospel

The section of St Paul's epistle to the Ephesians read today gives a summary of what those expect who are waiting for the moment of their regeneration; while the Gospel announces the defeat of Satan and also the praise of Christ's Mother. Both were chosen because of the stational church, as Schuster points out, the Epistle possibly because of the reference to light, which reminds us of the flames at the martyrdom of St Lawrence, the Gospel because of the two camps, one of the non-baptized in which the devil still reigned and the other of the baptized, whose captain is Christ.

D: The other parts of the Mass

These are, as it were, canticles of St Lawrence during his martyrdom. There are calls for help in times of distress, as in the Introit, collect and gradual; the hope of future glory, as in the Tract; the Offertory sings the praises of the divine Word, the Communion is an act of thanksgiving for all God's gifts, especially that of the Mass and the Blessed Sacrament.

II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

A: The Epistle: Eph. 5. 1-9

i. *Argument:*

The arguments of the two main parts of this epistle are so frequent in the Scriptures that we can safely refer the reader to other parts of this work for a fuller examination of them. For example, the twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost for the idea of pardon and the second Sunday of Lent for the notes on avarice and impurity (cf. p. 66). The notes for the first Sunday of Advent deal with the difference between the works of light and those of darkness.

2. The Texts:

(a) As God's favoured children you must be like him . . .

The previous verse says: Be kind and tender to one another, each of you generous to all, as God in Christ has been generous to you (4. 32). This verse continues the idea, we should pardon as he has done, because the children should imitate their Father.

(b) Order your lives ... upon the model of that charity.. .

The idea is that of a sacrificial offering; we should give forth the same sweet odour of sacrifice in our efforts to do good to others around us.

(c) As for debauchery . . .

Any kind of impurity, which should not as much as be named among Christians; the second vice of avarice is dealt with on the 2nd Sunday of Lent (cf. p. 66).

(d) Ribaldry or smartness in talk . . .

The reference is to jokes of double meaning, in doubtful taste; these were rife in the comedies of the time. The Christian's conversation should be *noble* in every sense of the word.

(e) This you must know well enough . . .

Two ideas stand out here; one is the comparison so often used by the Fathers, of idolatry and avarice—they are both gentile or pagan vices, but the main idea is that the avaricious man makes gold his god. The second idea is the energetic reaction against this which should be the attitude of every Christian, as part of God's inheritance. We cannot serve God and Mammon (Matt. 6. 24). He who does not serve God cannot be his son and therefore cannot inherit from him. He stays with the earth, in which he has placed his trust and to which he has given his heart.

(f) **Do not allow anyone to cheat you . . .**

It would seem that there were some among the Christians who did not consider certain types of impurity as sinful. St Paul is adamant; these are empty promises, and will only serve to bring down God's anger.

(g) Once you were all darkness . . .

If they are sons of rebellion (a Hebrew phrase for pagans) then we are the sons of light and the works of the light are pure, *all is goodness, holiness and truth,* i.e. both works of individual and social justice.

B: The Gospel: Luke 11. 14-28

It is not easy to place this miracle in the life of our Lord, because, if we read St Matthew and St Mark it would appear to have taken

place in Galilee; whereas according to St Luke's account Judaea is more likely. Even though there are some difficult phrases in this passage, it is a very useful one from the preacher's point of view. We may say that there are three main scenes into which it can be divided:

1. *The expulsion of the devil:*

One of the episodes in the struggle between Christ and Satan.

2. *Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost:*

The theologian and the preacher should not neglect verses 31 and 32 of the 12th chapter of St Matthew, which complete this doctrine. There the theologian will find the solution to the objections about the sin which cannot be forgiven; while the preacher will discover the harshest of all condemnations of bad will among his hearers. A reconstruction of the scene shows us our Lord surrounded by simple folk from the people and also some of those who had come from Jerusalem to trap him. When they have proved the undoubted working of a miracle in this case, some ask for a fresh sign from heaven, while others deny the divine element in the miracle, attributing it to the devil himself. Thesin ofthe Scribes and Pharisees consisted in a voluntary blindness which refused to see the hand of God in this event, thus rejecting the arguments by which God tried to convince them. This is the sin against the Holy Ghost, which cannot be forgiven in the sense that the very sin itself closes the gates of pardon. With such bad faith as this how can they be converted?

The theologian will find all the strong arguments he needs in St Augustine (cf. p. 130). It is not a question of the Church being unable to forgive this and other sins; it is merely that such sins as this lead, by their very nature, to a state of indisposition for pardon on the part of the sinner. The Church does, in fact, forgive all sins, including the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, adultery and apostasy—the chief source of argument in the times of the Montanists and Novatians.

The preacher will also find abundant material for sermons in the Gospel and also in St Augustine; there is nothing so like voluntary unbelief as the voluntary blinding of oneself to the truth, because it rejects the very people who could bring about the sinner's conversion.

But why is it called a sin against the Holy Ghost, and precisely the sin of blasphemy? Because to the Holy Ghost is appropriated the work of conversion (cf. St Augustine, p. 131).

All through this second part of the story in today's Gospel our Lord lets drop many phrases which go to show the necessity of being on his side in the fight and the danger of falling again into Satan's claws.

3. *The enthusiasm of the woman:*

The simple people showed their enthusiasm for the doctrine and miracles of our Lord. Perhaps the occasion of the woman's words was that our Lady approached the group at this moment; in any case the woman did no more than anticipate the feeling and mind of the Church years afterwards, and our Lord did not reprove her—far from it!

The Texts

i. *The cure:*

(a) He had just cast out a devil:

St Luke says that the devil was dumb; St Matthew that he was blind and dumb (Matt. 12. 22). The Fathers, joining the two, make this man into one of the most unhappy beings one could imagine, blind, dumb and possessed by Satan. Elsewhere we shall explain diabolic possession and why it was so frequent in the time of our Lord.

Spiritually, this man represents the soul in a state of sin. He who might have been a son of God is now possessed by the devil; blind to the light of truth and dumb so far as singing the praises of God is concerned. This is the devil's usual method of attacking souls, he blinds them and deafens them with the tinsel brilliances of the riches and pleasures of this world. Many authors see in this dumbness a reference to those who refuse to confess their sins.

We must also admire Christ face to face with the devil; the two incompatible powers, whose struggle we shall see outlined in this episode. The Lord cast out Satan and the world began to speak again. 'Three miracles in one man: the blind sees, the dumb speaks and the possessed finds himself free of the devil a thing which also happens in the case of those who begin to believe and who, once the devil has been cast out, receive the light and the faith, opening their lips in the praises of God' (St Jerome, *in loco*).

(b) The multitudes were filled with amazement:

They wondered and asked themselves: Can this be no other than the Son of David? (Matt. 12. 23).

The intellect usually recognizes the truth, but except in the case of self-evident truths, the will has a great part to play and can make the intellect stray from the truth. Interest the will against some truth and you will soon see that the latter will suspend consent to it by all types of specious arguments. Here we have a classical instance of this; the miracle was the same for all; some believed, while others thought very differently.

2. *The discussion:*

(a) But some of them said . ..

These were certain groups of the Scribes and Pharisees, as St Mark and St Matthew tell us. Dispersed among the crowd they spread their remarks quietly, saying that the devil had been cast out by his own power. Meanwhile others tried to put our Lord to the test by asking of him a sign from heaven, an ostentatious type of miracle.

It is hard to see why they were interested in this type of miraculous manifestation or if they were thinking of those recorded in the Old Testament, such as the manna or the fire and water which Elias caused to descend from above. However, they did repeat this plea on many occasions. (Cf. Mark 8. ii and Matt. i6. i.)

We may prescind from the bad faith of those who made this request and simply remind ourselves that it is not we who can show God how to act or what method to use; that is his business, while we must accept his choice. This has an application, not only in ascetical theology', but also in apologetics. Man must examine the miracles done by God's messenger, not exact this or that one from him to prove his divine authority, since one miracle is enough proof, no matter what it may be. However, when Renan asked God to work his miracles in such a way that they could be studied and checked, it would appear that God heard this challenge and met it, because he began to shower miracles on the bureau of doctors at Lourdes.

Has it any effect? For those in good faith, yes; but for the rest? The easiest way out for them has been not to go near that bureau but to shut themselves up once more in their fortress of unbelief, denying the possibility' of miracles altogether. But let us return to the others who said that our Lord worked this miracle by the power of the devil himself.

(b) Beelzebub:

He is one of the principal devils, since he was the keeper of the gates of hell, according to the ancient Jewish tradition. The name corresponds in some of its forms with the Hebrew word for Satan, while in other forms it is variously translated as 'lord of flies', 'lord of dung', etc. Other ancient commentators identify the personage with the false god worshipped at Accaron (cf. 4 Kings I. 2-3). Others derive the name from Baal-Zebul; the Lord of evil sacrifices. In a word, the prince of the devils, as St Luke says. The Jews will repeat this same calumny later when they say that they know our Lord to be a sinner (cf. John 9. 24).

(c) No kingdom can be at war with itself:

While he ignores those who ask him for a special sign from heaven still, our Lord answers this calumny because it may affect the belief

of the common people, the apple of his eye. Judging by the enthusiastic cry of the woman later on, the argument he employed must have been devastating, but probably we have only a brief summary of it in the Gospels.

The first argument used by Christ is summed up in that single phrase: No kingdom can be at war with itself without being brought to desolation, one house falling upon another. It is evident that the doctrine and the works of Christ are both at war with those of the devil, who is an angel so far as his intellect is concerned, and therefore too intelligent to fight against himself. The whole argument takes for granted the enmity between Christ and the devil.

Perhaps it is worth while thinking a little about this unity among the devils. That they hate one another is undeniable, yet to both Christ and the Jews it appears an absurdity to suppose that they will be divided when it is a question of activity. Why? Because they can put their supreme purpose before their mutual hate. St Augustine will call the devil's kingdom the city of self-love, yet it can live as a united whole when it is convenient. Ours is the city of the love of God and despising of self. Should not unity be the keystone of that kingdom? (cf. St Cyprian, pp. izyff). Unity maintains kingdoms, cities and families; discord ruins them. The more noble the ideal or common end, the holier the authority and the love which motivates all, so much the greater should be the unity. This is why the Church should reign supreme over all.

(d) By what means do your own sons cast them out? ...

Our Lord's argument now is this; you also have exorcists among you. By what power then do they cast out devils? You would not say with that of Satan, would you? Why do so in my case?

The existence of Jewish exorcists is substantiated in the Gospels and also in Josephus. Some of these worked in Corinth (Acts 19.13), and afterwards they degenerated into magicians, according to Josephus.

(e) The kingdom of God has suddenly appeared among you:

The very essence of the messianic kingdom is this fight against the power of Satan, who, from that moment, will be bound in chains (Apoc. 20. 2). Bound, because he will have less power over men, who, on the contrary, will have more grace at their disposal to resist him. 'Those nails which pierced the hands and feet of the Lord opened incurable wounds in those of Satan, while the pain of those sacred members was death to the powers of hell' (St Leo, *Senn. 10 De Passione'*).

(f) When a strong man, fully armed . . .

Christ draws the picture for us of the devil in his strong castle, armed and on the defensive. Tlis fortress is his knowledge and his

angelic nature; his arms those which St Ignatius pictures for us in the meditation of the two standards, i.e. riches, honours, the senses; his forces, those who are evil. Am I among them? How the devil defends his possession of the souls he thinks are his! And how Christ fights to save them! Can I look on indifferent while two so valiant captains fight over me?

(g) He who is not with me is against me:

Neutrality is impossible in so grave a matter. This phrase is an exact picture of what happens in the case of the doctrine of Christ and his Church. Both are necessary; not to admit the truth of them once they are known is to enlist under the other standard, that of Satan. We must work with Christ or with the devil; there is no middle path.

(h) The unclean spirit which has possessed a man and then goes out of him ...

The argument changes, as does the audience; and Christ now addresses himself to all, speaking of the danger of falling once again under the power of Satan after having been freed from his clutches. The Jews thought that the desert was the home of Satan. Once he has been cast out of the soul he will not remain idle or reconciled to his fate; instead he will do every thing to overcome the soul again. This may be the idea of the 'seven other spirits more wicked than itself' but the general theme of our Lord's advice is clear—to fall once again is more dangerous than the former state. Why? Perhaps because it is more difficult to rise again. St Paul seems to indicate this (Heb. 6. 4-6); also because we are now on the way to the formation of a habit of sin and our very weakness may mean that our ingratitude brings less graces.

3. *The enthusiasm of the woman:*

(a) Blessed is the womb that bore thee, the breast which thou hast sucked ...

A familiar saying in many languages, indicating enthusiasm for the person and family.

(b) Shall we not say, Blessed are those who hear the word of God ...

Our Lord accepts the praise given to his mother and then indicates the real reason for it. Our Lady was and is blessed because she, abo\e all others, heard the word of God and did it all her life. The Greek particle translated in some versions bv *yea rather* has the meaning of, yes, you are right, but . . .

SECTION III. THE FATHERS

I. ST JOHN €HRYSOSTOM

A: Envy:

1. *An evil without consolation:*

There is no evil which can be compared to the state of envy. Those who are impure at least find some pleasure in their sin and it lasts a short while; the envious man torments himself rather than the person he envies and lives perpetually in his guilt. As pigs roll in the mire and as the devil rejoices in our evil, so does the envious man, only resting when he sees evil overcome those he envies with sadness, finding his pleasure in the harm suffered by others and his evil in their good.

2. *How to avoid it:*

Is there anyone who does not know that envy is an evil thing? Yes, all know it, but the majority think that it cannot be compared with fornication, for example, or adultery. . . . Who accuses himself of envy? Who pleads with God to have mercy on him for this fault? No one . . . Consider that you do no harm to the person you envy; you merely turn the sword against yourself. Did Cain harm Abel? No; he merely sent him straight to heaven, while he heaped evils upon himself (442).

3. *Envy within the Church:*

Having pointed out that there are many, even within the church, who envy those in a position of authority, he goes on to indicate the dangers of this authority: Dignity and power lead to many things which displease God. It is necessary to possess a finely tempered soul in order to use rightly the power of command. . . . The people is not a God to whom we have to give an account of our lives. On the other hand, when you think of their praises remember that you are only thinking of obstacles, impediments and hidden reefs.

B: The last state worse than the first:

6. *In the case of those who fall again:*

(a) We must remember our Lord's warning . . .

He who does not correct his conduct once he has been freed from his evils will suffer even graver evils than those. For that reason Christ said that the devil will not rest, to indicate that such a man will necessarily fall into the trap of a new assault on the part of his enemy.

* PG· 30, 439-464·

(b) God's anger is great...

Let us understand that this was said, not only for them (the Jews) but also for us, when, once free from our former evils, we return again to them . .. May God preserve us from suffering as much as we are able! God is not lacking in sufferings which he can heap upon us. Just as his mere}' is great, so too, is his anger.

(c) However, his mercy is infinite ...

Do not, however, conclude from this merely the punishment, but also the infinite merey of God. How manv times we have committed the same sins, yet still he puts up with us. However, let us not presume, rather let us fear. If Pharao had learnt his lesson from the first plague he would not have had to suffer the others, nor, after that, would he have perished with his whole army. . . . Hear what the prophets have to say about that day (of judgement): Yes, the day of the Lord is coming, pitiless, full of vengeance and bitter retribution, ready to turn earth into a wilderness, ridding it of its sinful brood (Isaias 13. 9). There no-one will be able to help anyone else, nor shall we see the peaceful face of Christ. . . . Here we can go to the king and plead for the release of the condemned; there such a thing will not be possible, because pardon will be refused and the condemned wall have to endure the fire, suffering a torment which cannot be expressed in words . . .

(d) The need for preaching this hard fact:

I know' that you find it annoying and hard to have to listen to these words; but what can I do? . . . Since the majority of you are full of sins I would give anything to cause real sorrow and wound to the quick those who listen to me. Then, indeed, I would cease; but now I fear that many pay no attention to what I say and because of that negligence the penalty' will be worse. . . . Therefore let us feel sorrow, 1 beg of you, when we hear hell mentioned. There is nothing sweeter than to think of it, although it is hard. How can it be sweet to hear about hell, you will say to me? Because it is a terrible thing to fall into it, which these hard words will avoid for us, converting our souls, making them more devout. These words will elevate our minds, give wings to our reason, lift the siege of evil concupiscence, thus serving as a salutary medicine.

II. ST €YPRIAN

The Church: Kingdom of Christ

I. *Satan against Christ:*

What else befits us, then, beloved brethren, than to use foresight and watch with anxious hearts, both to perceive and beware

* PL. 4, 526 ff.

of the tricks of the crafty enemy, that we who have put on Christ, the wisdom of God the Father, may not seem to be wanting in wisdom in providing for our salvation? For it is not persecution alone that is to be feared, nor those things which advance in open attack to overwhelm and cast down the servant of God. Caution is easier where danger is manifest, and the mind is prepared beforehand when the adversary avows himself. The enemy is more to be feared and guarded against when he creeps on us secretly; when, deceiving us by the appearances *of* peace, he steals forward by hidden approaches, whence he has received the name of serpent.

2. *Heresy: deceit of Satan:*

Those whom he cannot keep in the darkness of the old way, he circumvents and deceives by the error of a new way. He snatches men from the Church itself; and while they seem to themselves to have already approached the light and to have escaped the night of the world, he pours over them again in their unconsciousness, new darkness; so that, although they do not stand firm in the Gospel of Christ and with the observation of the law of Christ, they still call themselves Christians and, walking in darkness, they think that they have the light, while the adversary . . . equips his ministers as if they were the ministers of righteousness, who maintain night instead of day, death for salvation, despair under the offer of hope, perfidy under the pretext of faith, antichrist under the name of Christ. . . .

3. *Peter, centre of unity:*

This happens, beloved brethren, so long as we do not return to the source of truth, seek the Head or keep the teachings of the heavenly Master. If anyone consider, these things there is no need for lengthy arguments or long discussions. There is an easy proof for faith and a summary of the truth. The Lord speaks to Peter, saying, T say unto thee, that thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys . . ? And again to the same he says after his resurrection: 'Feed my sheep . . he arranged, by his authority, that the origin of that unity should be but one . . . and the primacy is given to Peter that there might be shown one Church of Christ and one See . . . Does he who does not hold this unity of the Church think that he holds the unity of faith?

4. *The Church is one:*

The Church also is one, which is spread abroad far and wide, unto a multitude by an increase of fruitfulness. As there are many rays of the sun but only one brightness; and many branches of a tree, but one strength, based on its tenacious root. . . . Thus also the Church, all bright with the light of the Lord, sheds her rays on

the whole world, yet it is one light which is spread everywhere, nor is the unity of the body divided ... Her head is one, her source one; and she is one mother, plentiful in the results of her fruitfulness. From her womb we are born, by her milk we are nourished, by her spirit we are animated.

5. *The unity of the Church:*

(a) Whoever is separated from the Church and is joined to an adulteress, is separated also from the promises of the Church; nor can he who forsakes the Church attain the rewards of Christ. He is a stranger, he is profane, he is an enemy. He can no longer have God for his Father who has not the Church for his mother ... He who does not hold this unity does not hold God's law, does not hold the faith of the Father and the Son, does not hold life and salvation.

(b) Unity of mind and heart within the Church:

He himself in his Gospel warns us and teaches us, saying, There shall be one flock and one shepherd. And does anyone believe that in one place there can be either many shepherds or many flocks? The Apostle Paul, moreover, urging upon us this same unity, exhorts us, saying: I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no schism among you . . . Do you think that you can stand fast and live if you withdraw from the church and build for yourselves other homes and dwellings ... In the house of God, in the Church of Christ, men dwell with one mind and continue in concord and harmony.

(c) The prayer of the Church:

Nor let any deceive themselves by means of a false interpretation of that phrase of Christ: 'Wheresoever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' Corrupters and false interpreters of the Gospel quote the last words and lay aside the first.... If, he says, two of you agree upon earth: he placed agreement first; he has made the concord of peace a requisite; he taught that we should agree firmly and faithfully. How can he agree with anyone who does not agree with the body of the Church itself and with the universal brotherhood? How can two or three be assembled together in Christ's name when they are separated from Christ and from his Gospel? For we have not withdrawn from them, but they from us. . . . But the Lord speaks concerning his church, and to those also who are in his church he speaks, that if they are in agreement, if according with what he commanded and admonished although only two or three are gathered together and should pray with unanimity, they may obtain—even though they be but two or three—what they ask.

After pointing out that, outside the Church, neither martyrdom nor the charismatic gifts are worth anything he gives some rules for the treatment of heretics:

i. *The special malice of the sin of heresy.* We should turn away from such as these and avoid them, whoever they may be, who are separated from the Church of Christ. Such a one is perverted and sins, and is condemned of his own self. Does he think that he has Christ who acts in opposition to the priests of Christ, separating himself from the company of clergy and people? He bears arms against the Church, he contends against God's appointment. An enemy of the altar, a rebel against Christ's sacrifices, for the faith, faithless, for religion profane, a disobedient servant, an impious son, a hostile brother ... he dares to set up another altar, to make another prayer with unauthorized words, to profane the truth of the Lord's offering by false sacrifices, not knowing or caring to know that he who strives against the commands of God is punished for his temerity with a divine visitation.

ii. *We should not be scandalized at heresies.* Nor let anyone marvel, beloved brethren, that even some of the confessors advance to these lengths and that some sin thus wickedly. ... for the Lord chose Judas also among the Apostles and yet afterwards Judas betrayed the Lord. Yet not on that account did the faith and the firmness of the Apostles fail. . . .

iii. *We should try to convert them.* I indeed desire and endeavour and exhort that, if it be possible, none of the brethren should perish and that our Mother may enclose in her bosom the one body of a people in agreement. Yet if wholesome counsel cannot recall to the way of salvation certain leaders of schisms and originators of dissensions, who abide in blind and obstinate madness, yet do you others, either taken in simplicity or deceived by some crafty misleading cunning, loose yourselves from the nets of deceit, free your erring steps from errors; acknowledge the straight way of the heavenly road.

iv. *The peace and unity of the Church.* God is one and Christ is one, and his Church is one, and the faith is one, and the people is joined into a substantial unity of body by the bond of concord. Unity cannot be severed; nor can one body be separated by a division of its structure, nor torn into pieces with its very entrails wrenched asunder. Whatever has proceeded from the womb cannot live and breathe in its detached condition, but loses the substance of health.

III. ST AUGUSTINE

A: Obstinacy: a sin against the Holy Ghost

1. *Unity of the kingdom of God:*

So that no one can say that the kingdom of God is divided by heresies our Lord adds another phrase: He that is not with me is against me. He does not say: He who is not going under my name or the appearances of my sacraments, but he who is not with me, he is against me. He does not say: he that gathereth not in my name; but, he who gathereth not with me, scattereth. It is not the kingdom of Christ which is divided, but it is men who seek to divide that which has been bought with the precious blood of the Saviour ... he who does not depart from evil does not belong to the kingdom of Christ, even though he may insist on bearing his name.

2. *Impenitence: a sin against the Holy Ghost:*

In continuation, after reproving the Jews, the Lord says: Now I tell you this, there is pardon for all the other sins and blasphemies of men, but not for blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. A truly difficult phrase. To whom does it refer? To all those who have uttered a blasphemy against the Holy Ghost? And who, before becoming a Christian or a Catholic, has not blasphemed against him, laughing at the idea of our sanctification which is his work, or going after magical arts in search of false miracles or even denying the power and the divinity of Jesus?... There are those who interpret the phrase thus: those only sin against the Holy Spirit who, washed with the laver of regeneration in the Church and having received the Spirit, sink once again into some deadly sin such as adultery, homicide or apostacy, either against the name of Christians or against the Church of Christ. I do not know how such an interpretation can be defended, since the Church has never denied pardon for these crimes.

First of all, I must warn you that the Lord does not say that all blasphemy against the Holy Spirit cannot be forgiven but only *the* blasphemy. We shall have to see if that refers to all or only to some, as I think, otherwise who could be saved ?... To confirm my opinion let me remind you of the occasion on which our Lord said to the Jews: if I had not come and given them my message they would not have been in fault, with which remark he does not intend to say that they would not have had any sin at all, burdened as they were with all kinds of faults, but that they would not have been guilty' of the worst sin of all, that of rejecting him. The same must be said about this passage; it does not refer to all blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, but only to one.

* From Sermon 71.

After saying that all conversion is the work of the Moly Spirit and that his first gift in the supernatural order is forgiveness of sin, which is a free gift; he goes on:

The impenitent heart goes against this free gift and this grace of God. This impenitence is the spirit of blasphemy which will not be forgiven in this world or in the world to come. Against this Spirit from whom baptism receives the power of wiping away all sin and the Church receives the authority to pardon all crimes, he utters blasphemies in thought or word who, drawn towards penance by the grace of God, hardens his heart, storing up for himself anger in that day "of retribution, when God will reveal the justice of his judgements" (Rom. 2. 6).

3. *But we should never despair of anyone:*

Of no one should we despair, since the mercy of God leads him all the time to penance, for he does not wish the death of the sinner, but that he should be converted and should live (Ez. 18. 23). Today he is a pagan, but are you sure that he will not be a future Christian ? He is an infidel Jew today; what of it? Can he not, tomorrow, believe in Christ? Today he is a heretic, but what if tomorrow he should follow the Catholic truth ?... this blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, remember that we cannot judge it in this world.

4. *Jf'hy is this unpardonable?*

How can that be pardoned which is itself an obstacle to pardon ? All sins are forgivable in those who have not a conscience burdened with this sin, which cannot be pardoned ; on the contrary, the one who is guilty of this sin cannot receive pardon for any others, because this one will not be forgiven, and it is the chain which impedes the remission of the rest.

5. *The forgiveness of sin is the work of the Holy Spirit:*

In the same way sins, which, by the way, cannot be forgiven outside the Church, are wiped away by the same Spirit which gives unity to that Church. This forgiveness, although it be the action of the whole Trinity, is attributed to the Holy Ghost, because he is the Spirit of adoption, who teaches us to call on the Father (Rom. 8. 15) in order to be able to say to him, forgive us our trespasses (Matt. 6. 12). To whom then could this forgiveness be better attributed than to the Holy Spirit, common to the Father and the Son.

6. *It is only to be found in the true Church:*

But when it is said that the Holy Spirit is given only in the Catholic Church I suppose that our ancestors meant us to understand by that the saying of the Apostle : because the love of God is spread abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us. For this is that very love which is wanting in all who are cut off

from the communion of the Catholic Church . . . whatever, therefore, may be received by heretics and schismatics, the charity which covcreth a multitude of sins is the special gift of Catholic unity and peace; nor is it found in all who are within that bond, since not all who are within it are of it, as we shall see. In any case, outside that bond such love cannot exist. . . . (*De Bapt.* III. 16, PL. 43,148).

7. *Apostasy and impenitence:*

All this gives us to understand that the forgiveness of sins and of blasphemy cannot be found except in the church of Christ, gathered together in the Spirit, which does not scatter herself abroad. She is not divided against herself as is the unclean spirit. Therefore all these other congregations (or perhaps they would be more aptly called dispersions) which call themselves the churches of Christ, divided and Contran' to one another, enemies of that unity which is his true Church, do not belong to the society of Christ, even though it appears that they bear his name. They would indeed belong if the Holy Spirit which is the bond of unity, were divided against himself. . .

Even the very denial of Christ can be pardoned, but he who is an enemy of this gift (of pardon) and does not ask for it with true repentance, but who contradicts it by his impenitence, makes his sin unforgivable.

B: The two cities

1. *Their origin:*

Two loves have formed two cities; the earthly by the love of self, even to the contempt of God; the heavenly by the love of God, even to the contempt of self. The former, in a word, glories in itself, the latter in God. For the one seeks glory of men; but the greatest glory of the other is God, the witness *of conscience.* ... In the one, the princes and nations it subdues are ruled by the love *of* ruling; in the other the princes and the subjects serve one another in love, the latter obeying while the former take thought for *all.* The one delights in its own strength, represented in the person *of its* rulers; the other says to its God, T will love thee, O Lord, my strength.'

2. *The historic origin:*

Of the first parents of the human race, then, Cain was the first-born, and he belonged to the city of men; after him was born Abel, who belonged to the city of God. For as in the individual the truth of the Apostle's statement is easily seen: 'it was not the principle of spiritual life that came first; natural life came first, then spiritual life', ... so it was in the human race as a whole. When these two cities began to run their course by a series of births and deaths, the citizen of this world was the first-born and after him the stranger

* From *The City of God.*

in this world, the citizen of the city of God, predestined by grace, elected by grace, by grace a stranger below and by grace a citizen above. . . . Accordingly, it is recorded of Cain that he built a city, but Abel, being a sojourner, built none. For the city of the saints is above, although here below it begets citizens, in whom it sojourns until the time of its reign should come, when it shall gather together all in the day of resurrection; and then shall the promised kingdom be given to them in which they shall reign with Christ, their Prince, the King of ages, time without end.

3. *Attacks of the earthly kingdom against the spiritual:*

The power which God, at certain appointed times, permits and concedes to the devils that they may give expression to their hatred of the city of God by stirring up against it those men who are under their influence, and may not only receive sacrifice from those who offer it to them willingly, but may also exact it by violence from those who are unwilling—this power is not merely found to be harmless but also it is even useful to the Church, completing as it does the numbers of martyrs whom the city of God esteems as her more illustrious and honoured citizens, because they have striven even to blood in their fight against impiety. If the ordinary language of the Church permitted it, we might even call these men our heroes. . . . Porphyry, expressing however more the views of others than his own, says that a good god or genius cannot come to a man unless the evil genius has been first of all propitiated, implying that the evil deities had more power than the good, for until they be appeased and give place the good can give no assistance. . . . This is not the way of the true and holy religion; not thus do our martyrs conquer Juno, that is the powers of the air, who envy the virtues of the pious.

4. *How these attacks are beaten ojf:*

It is by true piety that men of God cast out the hostile power of the air who opposes godliness; it is by exorcising it, not by propitiating it. They overcome all the attacks of the enemy by praying to their God against him, not by praying to him. For the devil cannot conquer or subdue any except those who are in league with sin; and therefore he is overcome in the name of him who assumed a human nature, without sin; that, being himself both priest and sacrifice, he might bring about the remission of sins, he the mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, by whom we are reconciled to God, the cleansing from sin being accomplished.

For men are separated from God only by sins, from which we are cleansed in this life, not through any virtue of ours, but by the divine compassion; through his mercy, not through our own power. For whatever virtue we call our own is itself bestowed upon us by his goodness. We might attribute too much to ourselves

in this flesh unless we lived in receipt of pardon until we lay it down. This is the reason why there has been given to us, through this Mediator, the grace that we, who are polluted by sinful flesh, should be cleansed by the likeness of sinful flesh. By this grace of God wherein he has shown his great mercy towards us, we are both governed by death in this life and, after this life, are led onwards by the vision of unchangeable truth to the fullness of perfection.

SECTION IV. THEOLOGIANS

I. ST THOMAS AQUINAS

(We shall give a summary of the main ideas of St Thomas concerning the nature of the devil, his influence over man and the way man can combat his attacks.)

A: The devil, his nature

The devil is an angel by nature, but not, of course, by grace. Among the demons there is a natural order of superiority and inferiority by nature, which cannot exist in the case of man, since men are all of the same nature. The higher order of the devils are the worst of all and more unhappy than the others. Created good by their nature, they become evil through their perverted wills which gave rise to sin. The sin of the devils presents some difficulty from our human way of thinking of it, however it can be explained. There are two ways in which a free will can sin; one is through choosing evil, as for example, when a man commits adultery, which is evil of itself. These sins always come from some ignorance or error, otherwise evil would not be chosen as if it were good. Now an angel cannot sin in this way, because he has no passions which can disturb his reason nor any habit which can predispose him to this kind of sin.

The other way in which sin can be committed is when the free will chooses something which in itself is good, but which becomes bad because it is not in agreement with the due rule or measure of action allotted to the individual. In this case the defect which is the cause of the sin does not come from the thing chosen but from the very choice itself, as for instance, if a man were to choose to pray, neglecting the orders of the Church. These sins do not presuppose ignorance, but rather a certain inadvertence, and this is how the angels sinned, by choosing something which was good for them, but without subordinating themselves to the divine will.

2. ***They*** *live obstinate in their evil:*

According to the Catholic faith it is necessary to maintain firmly that the wills of the good angels are confirmed in good and, on the

contrary, that the wills of the demons are confirmed in evil (1. q. 64. a. 2),

The reason for this obstinacy of the devils is to be sought, not from the gravity of their sin, but from the condition or state of their natures. As Damascene says: what is death for man is their fall for the angels; it is undoubtedly true that all the sins of men, whether great or small, can be forgiven before death, but after it they cannot be forgiven and last for ever (1. q. 64. a. 2. c).

St Thomas explains this by comparing the way a man knows and chooses and the way the angels do it. The angelic knowledge is rather like our grasp of first principles, it is incapable of change. Man, on the contrary, has a flexible knowledge of all except first principles, therefore his will, which depends on his knowledge in this matter, will also be capable of changing. The angelic will, however, once it chooses something, adheres to that choice for ever. Therefore the wills of the good angels are permanently fixed on that good which they have chosen; while those of the demons will be for ever fixed in evil.

3. *They have the power of trying man:*

God gives them this power so that they may co-operate in the order of the universe even after their sin, and also so that man may practise his virtue by resisting their attacks. However, this power will be withdrawn at the last day, when all the bad, both men and angels, will be in hell and the good in heaven.

B: The action of the devils on man

1. *An incident in the gospels shows us how much damage they can do us:*

Christ permitted the devils to enter into the swine as St John Chrysostom says, not because he was persuaded to permit it by the devils themselves, but:

(a) to teach us the magnitude of the harm they cause us by keeping us in chains;

(b) that all may know that the devils will not dare to do anything without his consent;

(c) to show us that the devil would have done more harm to men than to the swine if divine providence had not come to the help of the former.

2. *The natural power the devil has over man is limited by God:*

By his very nature the devil is capable of doing many things, but he is forbidden to do them by the divine power; thus God protected Christ and his mother from Satan, who otherwise would have been ferocious in his attacks against them before the time permitted by God.

3. *They can do extraordinary things:*

No creature can work miracles without God's permission and power, but the devils can do extraordinary things by their very nature as pure spirits, so much so that at times they may appear to work real miracles (I q. 114. a. 4. c).

4. *They can act on the imagination and the senses:*

Both interiorly and exteriorly the devil can act on man's faculties, either by means of images in his imagination or by representations made in a material form to the senses.

C: The double attack of the devil on man

1. *Inciting him to sin:*

This he can do, with God's permission, but he is not commanded to do it by God, who merely permits this diabolic activity according to his just judgement (1. q. 114. a. 1. *ad him.).*

2. *Chastising man:*

At times God makes use of the devils to chastise man (cf. 3 Kings 22. 22), but on these occasions the devils act with a very different intention from that of God; because they punish man with hatred and envy, while God merely seeks the ends of his divine justice.

(a) The devil is not the direct cause of man's sins; that is merely man's will. Neither the thing offered from without, nor he who offers it nor he who persuades is the sufficient cause of sin. The devil merely proposes or tries to persuade, he can do no more.

(b) He induces us to sin through the imagination and the sensitive appetite, thus tending to obscure the working of the intellect. However, we may say that he is the indirect cause of all sins, since he was the one who induced our first parents to sin, and from this first sin all mankind received an inclination towards all sin.

(c) *The devil, once he is defeated, returns to the attack:*

St Bede says: frequently, when we make an effort to return to God after having sinned, our old enemy spreads new snares for us and attacks us furiously; this he does either to make us hate virtue or to revenge himself for having being defeated.

There are some who maintain that, after the devil has been defeated, he cannot return to the attack and tempt us to that same sin or to any other. Others think that he can tempt us to other sins, but not to that in which he has been defeated; and this is more probable, provided it is understood for a time, no more. ... In support of this opinion there are two reasons: the first is taken from the divine mercy, as John Chrysostom says: 'the devil does not tempt man for as long a time as he would like, but for that period of time permitted by God; for even though he allows him to tempt us a little, nevertheless, he restrains him because of the weakness

of our nature.' The second reason is taken from the cunning of the devil. Thus St Ambrose says: 'the devil fears to insist in his attacks so as not to give room for continued triumphs?

(d) It is not licit for man to conjure up the devil or to make any kind of pact with him, either explicit or implicit. There is a state of open war between man and Satan, for which reason man may not make use of the devil in any way whatsoever (2-2. q. 96. a. 2. *ad ÿum).*

D : Remedies against the attacks of the devil

1. *The Passion of Christ:*

The Passion of Christ has provided man with a perfect defence against all the attacks of the devil; in fact, even those who died before Christ found a remedy for their sins in this same Passion, but it is more perfect now than it was before.

2. The greatest help man receives is undoubtedly the grace of God, a result of the passion and death of Christ.

3. *Baptism is the first defeat of the devil:*

All those who are not baptized are in some way under the power of the devil through original sin. Exorcism destroys the power of the devil, especially in so far as the full reception of the sacrament is concerned. It is intended to overcome the attacks of the devil which come from within (3 q. 71. a. 3. c).

(Here is included a summary of the struggle between Christ and Satan; also the doctrine concerning diabolic possession. These notes are based on the articles in the *Dictionnaire de la Bible* of Vigouroux and d'Alés, DTC. art. *Possession diabolique)*

i. *Satan against Christ:*

(a) During the public life:

Satan appeared for the first time during the temptations (cf. 1st Sunday of Lent); defeated, he retired and: Left him in peace until the time should come (Luke 4. 13). Shortly afterwards a possessed man cried out: Hast thou come to make an end of us? I know thee for what thou art, the Holy One of God (Luke 4. 34; Mark 1. 24). This incident was repeated on various occasions, and always our Lord told the devil to be quiet, possibly because he would not accept testimony from Satan. In any case, such manifestations were dangerous, because they excited the peoples' minds, giving them false ideas of Christ's messianic character and mission. Satan fought against Christ by raising up the Jews against him (John 8. 44) and by taking possession of the soul of Judas (Luke 22. 3; John 13. 2, 27).

(b) During the Passion:

As his passion approached Jesus announced: one is coming who has power over the world, but no hold over me (John 14. 30); he

who rules this world has had sentence passed on him already (John 16. ii). This he said in anticipation of the struggle to come; and in the Garden he gives himself up to his enemies because it is the hour of the powers of darkness (Luke 22. 53). At length the victory was won: by his death he would depose the prince of death, that is, the devil (Heb. 2. 14).

2. *Diabolic possession:*

(a) The truth of the Scripture narratives:

In the Old Testament there is only one case mentioned, that of Saul, who was possessed by an evil spirit (1 Kings 16. 4) Josephus mentions various cases and speaks about prayers and exorcisms (A. I. 6. 8. 2).

There are three cures of demoniacs mentioned in the Gospels, some of them concerning whole groups. The apostles were given the power to cast out devils and there is mention of other cases denounced by them of people casting out devils in Christ's name although they did not openly profess him. The texts obviously speak of real possession, and the evangelists are careful to distinguish between the physical illness and the diabolic intervention, indicating the symptoms of the latter.

(b) Character of diabolic possession:

Normally the cases referred to in the Gospels are accompanied by some physical illness, blindness or dumbness (Matt. 12. 22; Luke ii. 14), and at times there are obvious cases of paralysis and epilepsy. There is real lunacy too, as in the case of the possessed boy (Matt. 17. 14; Mark 9. 16; Luke 9. 39). The men of Gerasa are violent, refusing to wear clothes and breaking the chains with which they were bound (Matt. 3. 23; Mark 5. 2; Luke 8. 27). Sometimes there was more than one devil in the possessed person (cf. Mark 5. 9; Luke 8. 30).

The psychological effects of the devil's activity in these cases are obsession and possession. The former refers to the incitement to temptation or to other activities by means of the imagination and the senses; while the latter means that the devil takes possession of the body of the person concerned, making use of it as he pleases. The soul, in such cases, is not responsible for what the body does, and for this reason our Lord does not address the sick person, but the devil who has taken possession of him. A special feature of this possession is the extraordinary knowledge of the person concerned, a knowledge which is not within the capacity' of a mere human being; also extraordinary physical force.

(c) Thc reality of diabolic possession:

i. There is no question here of an unknown illness, as so many have objected. There is, in some cases, a physical illness, but the

apostles were well able to distinguish between it and the possession. They speak of them as two different things; even though the illness may have been produced by the devil in such cases (cf. Matt. 8. 14; 12. 9; Mark 3. 10; Luke 6. 18). There is no illness known to man which, on ceasing, leaves the patient writhing on the ground half dead or which goes into some swine which happen to be near at hand. What is more, our Lord does not correct the apostles' ideas, on thc contrary, he expressly gave them power over the devils. He speaks of the cases of possession as authentic activities of the devil in the people concerned.

ii. Nor are these incidents reduced to those mentioned in the Gospels. There are reasons why the devil was more active in the time of our Lord than he is today, at least so far as possession is concerned, owing to the idolatry rife in that part of the world which often took the form of devil worship. St Augustine speaks of this several times. The Jews also fell into this sin before the captivity in Babylon and the devil was amply satisfied to let it go at that. After the captivity, when they returned to the worship of the True God the cases of diabolic possession were more frequent.

What is more, there are authentic cases of diabolic possession, even in our own day (cf. *inf.* p. 152).

II. ST BONAVENTURE

Union through obedience to the Vicar of Christ

1. *All under a supreme authority:*

Having pointed out that there are many in a position of authority in the Church to whom we owe obedience he goes on: However, all this variety must be reduced to one supreme prelate in whom is concentrated the universal principality over all. It must be reduced, I say, not merely to Christ and God, but also to his Vicar, and this not by any human law but by a divine decree, by means of which Christ made St Peter the Prince of the Apostles, who were themselves made princes over the earth. This Christ did because it is, demanded by the order of universal justice, the unity of the Church and the stability inside this order and unity.

2. *The order ofjustice:*

(a) As in the physical world:

This unity exists in man in whom there is one heart which spreads life through the body; one head which governs it and a free will which rules over all the forces of the soul and body of man.

(b) As in the case of earthly justice:

So far as earthly justice is concerned, it is necessary that there should be one judge who decides causes definitively and, on the

* From *Evangelical Perfection,* Ch. 4, Art. 3.

other hand, one prince or ruler who makes the laws, so that there shall be no discord or contradictions or schisms through the multiplication of rulers or judges, in which case there would be no end to law suits, through lack of a supreme judge.

(c) The case of heavenly justice is much the same, because there all is ruled by the one Supreme Spirit.

This universal law has also been observed by Christ in his Church.

3. *The unity of the Church demands it:*

The unity of the Church demands it, because since she is one hierarchy, one sole body and one spouse, she must also have one sole hierarch, one head, one husband.

He goes on to point out that the internal and external unity of the Church requires this unity of government and he quotes St Cyprian (cf. p. 127) in support of this doctrine.

4. *The stability of the Church demands it:*

(a) Unity, the main-spring of stability:

It has been proved that, just as division brings about ruin, so unityr, as it becomes greater, communicates greater firmness and stability. Thus all the stability' of the Church derives from the stability of the Rock which is Christ and from Peter, the Rock's vicar on earth. That is why he said to Peter, 'thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church', and also T have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not' (Luke 22. 32). It is clear that such a prayer was not without efficacy ... it is the unity with the Supreme Pontiff which makes the Church stable and permanent.

(b) Unity, source of power:

It is clear that when power is more united it is more efficacious; and when it is more effective in its unity it is even more so in its effects. From which it follows that the full power had to be confided to one Supreme Pontiff.

(c) Unity, principle of dignity:

... it is therefore proved that the unity of the Supreme Pontiff is the only thing which gives pre-eminent dignity' to the whole Church. Just as the senses must all be united in the head, so all dignity' must be united in the Supreme Pontiff. That is why St Bernard says to Pope Eugenius: Let us see who you are. Let us see whom you represent in the Church of God. Who are you? You are the Supreme Pontiff, the prince of the bishops, the heir of the apostles; you are Abel in primogeniture, Noe in government, Abraham in your patriarchate, Melchisedech in orders, Aaron in dignity, Moses in authority, Samuel in judgement, Peter in power and Christ in unity.

SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. ST TERESA OF AVILA

A: The devil and his activity in the soul

Signs of the diabolical influence in the spiritual life:

(a) False humility:

I would forget all the favours the Lord had bestowed upon me; nothing would remain to me but the mere recollection of them, like the memory of a dream, and this caused me great distress. For when a person is in this condition the understanding is dulled; and so I was tormented by a thousand doubts and suspicions. I thought that I had not understood properly, and that it might have been my imagination, and that it was bad enough for me to be myself deluded, without also deluding good people. I felt that I was so evil that all the evils and heresies that had ever arisen were due to my sins.

This is a false humility, and it was invented by the devil so that he might unsettle me and see if he could throw my soul into a state of despair.

(b) Confusion and obscurity:

I have so much experience by this time of the devil's work that he sees I know his tricks and so he troubles me much less with this kind of torment than formerly. His part in it is evident from the disquiet and unrest with which it begins, from the turmoil which he creates in the soul as long as his influence lasts, and from the darkness and misery into which he plunges it, causing it a dryness and a bad disposition for prayer and for everything that is good. He seems to stifle the soul and enslave the body so that both seem to be powerless. . . .

In that other humility which is the work of the devil the soul has not light enough to do anything good and thinks of God as one who is always wielding fire and sword. It pictures God's justice and, although it has faith in his mercy, for the devil has no power to take away that faith, still this does not bring any consolation, because when my soul thinks of God's mercy this only increases its torments, because I realize that it involves me in greater obligations.

B: Description of the devil's activities

What happens at such times is this; the devil lays hold of my understanding suddenly, by making use of such trifling things that at any other times I should laugh at him. He confuses the mind

* From *The Life St. Teresa of Avila, by Herself,* Ch. 31.

and does whatever he likes with it, so that the soul, bound in chains and no longer mistress of itself, can think of nothing but the absurdities which he presents to it. ... It has sometimes seemed to me, indeed, that the devils behave as if they were playing ball with the soul, so incapable is it of freeing itself from their clutches. It goes about in search of relief and God does not allow' it to find any; it has only the power of the free will and it is unable to reason clearly. I mean that its eyes seem to be blindfolded ... the soul in avoiding giving offence to God, seems to do so by habit. This explanation, however, leaves out of consideration the fact that the Lord has it in his keeping.

At such times faith, like the other virtues, is numbed and asleep. It is not lost, for the soul has a firm belief in what is taught by the Church, but though it can testify with the lips it seems in other respects to be oppressed and dulled, feeling as if it knows God only as something heard of afar off.... To go and say its prayers, or to be alone, only causes it greater anguish, for the inward torment which it feels is intolerable and, in my experience, something like that of hell. Indeed, this is a fact, for the Lord revealed it to me in a vision; the soul is inwardly burning without knowing who has kindled the fire, whence it comes or how to flee from it nor with what to put it out.

C: Remedies

The Saint indicates as inadequate remedies in her own case: reading, attempts at conversation or even consultation with her confessor. As general remedies, she indicates as efficacious: Holy Communion, faith and humility of heart. She says: T feel quite certain that the devil will not deceive, and that God will not permit him to deceive, a soul which has no trust whatever in itself, and is strengthened in faith and knows full well that for every act of faith it would suffer a thousand deaths.'

D: With the Lord we need not fear the devils

For, although I used sometimes to see the devils, as I shall say later, I have hardly ever been afraid of them again—indeed, they seem to be afraid of me. I have acquired an authority over them given me by the Lord of all things, so that they are no more trouble to me now than flies. They seem to me to be such cowards—as soon as they see that one despises them they flee, powerless. They are enemies who can only make a direct assault on those whom they see giving in to them or on servants of God whom, for their greater good, God allows to be tried and molested in this way. May his majesty make us fear him whom we should fear, understanding that one venial sin can do more harm than all the forces of hell combined. ... If only we will hate everything for God's sake and embrace the

Cross, trying to serve him in truth, the devil will fly from those truths as from a plague. He is a lover of lies and a liar himself. He will have nothing to do with anyone who walks in truth. . . . Not a fig shall I care for all the devils in hell: it is they who shall fear me. ... We know that he cannot move a finger unless the Lord permits it. Whatever are we thinking of? I am quite sure that I am more afraid of people who are themselves terrified of the devil than of Satan himself. For he cannot harm me in the least.

II. BLESSED JOHN OF AVILA

We shall take some extracts from a sermon he preached on Holy Thursday, in which he is demonstrating the signs which lead us to a knowledge of the true Church. A summary of his argument will be sufficient, with a few direct quotations.

1. *Outside the Church there is no salvation:*

It is as impossible for anyone to save himself outside her as it would have been for those not to drown who were not in the ark; perhaps even more impossible. ... In her with a very little effort one can be saved, because the faith and good works which are demanded are easy with the grace of God; but outside her nothing is of any use.

2. *How to know her:*

What is the address of your house, O Lord, that we may know how to find it and so attend your banquet? Just as you enter the city you will be met by a man carrying a jar of water; follow him (Luke 22. 10). What a sign! How extraordinary, simple and humble —and how true, full of meaning. Water, in the Scriptures, signifies wisdom (Ecclus. 15. 3); and also grace itself (John 7. 37-39). Where you find heavenly wisdom there is my church.

(a) The Scriptures and the sacraments:

He continues with the same example of the jar of water, in which he sees the Scriptures, containing divine wisdom and also the grace of God enclosed in the sacraments.

(b) One alone is not enough:

That church which has and believes in the Scriptures and the sacraments, by which grace is given, she has the signs of the true church. Whereas that church which says that there is no such thing as Scripture or that the grace of God is given by faith alone, without the sacraments, does not possess the sign given by Christ.

3. *The Pope, a sure sign:*

(a) Follow a man who is carrying a jar of water; our Lord said. If you look at the jar merely or the water you may be deceived; but

look at the tact that a man is carrying it and nothing will be wanting to you to judge rightly. There may be heretics who hold the words of God and the sacraments; but they do not want to confess that there is a man—one man—who carries this jar of water. They say that it is not necessary that there should be a head, one man, and that it is enough that we have for our head the God-man. ... There will never be one faith and one baptism, or one God or one Christ unless there is one man who carries the jar of water, whom do you follow. If this is not so, ask those who do not wish to admit that there is a man who is Christ's Vicar on earth, if they have faith which is one, and you will see that each one has his own, and that there are as many faiths as there are heads.

(b) The Pope does not create the faith, he preserves it and thus forms a sure sign of the true church of Christ, because the truth of Christ has to be known as such, and for this it is necessary that the Church should tell us what is and what is not the doctrine of Christ. This is the sure sign of the Church where Christ dwells; that it has a head who is the Pope, whom all have to follow and obey. It is a visible Church, not an invisible one, because if it were invisible then what it has to teach and declare would be obscure.

III. FRAY ALONSO DE CABRERA

We shall content ourselves with a summary of his Considerations for the third Sunday of Lent, in which he compares the hardened sinner to the possessed man in today's Gospel.

I. *The possessed man is a sign of the hardened sinner:*

(a) Hardness of heart as a punishment from God:

We are so stupid that God has to use symbols and signs to teach us. Thus, he punished the first sin of Adam with death so that we could see how dangerous sin is and what it does in the soul. In the same way, to show us what a terrible thing it would be if God abandoned the soul, allowing her to be hardened in her evil, he allowed the devils to possess the bodies of men, so that we could see how they are treated. Men do not sin so much by not knowing as by not willing. The truth is in the intellect shouting to be heard; it is a good thing to fast, to keep chaste ... and from thence, naturally the same truth would like to pass to the will and then into action, and that is what the good people do.. . . But the evil ones imprison that truth unjustly, closing it up in the mind, and refuse to let the will act on it.

Then God is liable to allow them to continue in their vices and, although it is true that they find much pleasure in them, nevertheless, God's intention is, in leaving them alone in this life, to impose a terrible punishment on them later.

(b) He removes grace and his special helps:

God is the universal cause of that spiritual light which illuminates every man who comes into this world, not of necessity, but because he willed it freely, with infinite wisdom and counsel. Thus, when anyone maliciously refuses to take advantage of that light and closes the doors of his will, so God also withdraws that light, not sending his special favours, and he remains dark, not merely because he wills it but also because God has withdrawn his grace. . . . this abandonment by God has three effects; blindness in the intellect, deafness in the ears and hardness in the will; and this is the very limit to which the evil of man can bring him and the most terrible punishment which God can inflict.

2. *A description of the hardened sinner:*

Cabrera repeats the description given by St Bernard in his letter to Eugenius: it is he who does not rend himself by contrition, is not softened by piety, or moved by pleas, or gives way under threats and is merely hardened by punishments. Ungrateful for all the benefits he has received, heedless of counsels, cruel in judgements, shameless, intractable in danger, has no love for man or God . . . he neidier fears God nor respects men.

He then goes through each one of these section by section, giving a brief description of each:

(a) He does not rend his heart in sorrow:

Alexander, in drink, killed his friend Clitus and then, on discovering what he had done, wished to kill himself. 'What must he feel who, drunk with his passions, has crucified with his sins the Christ of God ?'

(b) Is not softened by piety:

He quotes St Paul: Or is it that thou art presuming on that abundant kindness of his, which bears with thee and waits for thee? Dost thou not know that God's kindness is inviting thee to repent? This kindness the hardened heart despises, made even worse by these delays of divine justice. Traitor, are you unaware of the fact that these delays of God's mercy are given you that you may satisfy his justice by penance ?

(c) Is not moved by pleas:

You are not satisfied, treacherous creature, with the voice of the Church, the inspirations of the Holy Spirit or the pleas of Christ.... How careful he is to call at your door repeatedly, walk along the street and knock! See where I stand at the door knocking(Apoc. 3. 20). He it is who stands and knocks at your door, pleading with his peace and friendship. . . . What cries do not the ministers of God give in their attempts to make you friends with God. We are Christ's

ambassadors, then, and God appeals to you through us: we entreat you in Christ's name, make your peace with God (2 Cor. 5. 20).

(d) Does not give way before threats:

How many times he has heard the rigour of justice preached, the fear of its signs and the certainty of death . . . and having heard all this, he goes off to play and to laugh, he goes to his bed as if he were a saint.

(e) Punishments harden him :

Under the troubles which heal others he grows more sick. In illness he rebels, at the loss of anything he blasphemes, in injustice done to him he curses, in poverty he steals, lies and deceives. . . . It was not peace that you made, but a mere truce, in order to return once more to your cruel war.

(f) Ungrateful:

He neither esteems them nor knows them and to all of them he is ungrateful.

(g) Heedless of counsels:

Proud, fond only of his own opinion, he will not even listen to those of others, thus he falls and crashes.

(h) Cruel in judgements:

Just as, for himself, he is slack and lax, in the case of others he is without mercy. .. .You will see some sinners who, in their lives and works, are nothing less than fiends incarnate; no sooner do they know of another's fault than they condemn him . . .

(i) Shameless:

They flaunt their sins as did the inhabitants of Sodom. They fear neither God nor man. Let each one look into his heart and take the pulse of his life; and if there he finds any of these bad signs, let him apply the remedy while there is yet time, before he becomes hardened. Not all stones are equally hard although all are stones.

IV. BOSSUET

Repeated Falls

We shall give a brief scheme of the second sermon preached by Bossuet on the text: Till the last state of that man is worse than the first (Luke 11. 26).

I. *The general argument:*

To explain how repeated falls make the sin more grave and offend God's goodness we shall develop three arguments; based on the three qualities of penance, i.e. reconciliation, remedy and sacrament. To understand what those three qualities mean we shall have to indicate that sin brings in its train three misfortunes, the

separation from God, sickness of the soul, and finally, its uncleanness. Penance, by blotting out the sin, unites us with God once more, cures our sickness of soul and cleans it from its stains. There is a reconciliation of friendship, a remedy for the sickness and a sanctifying sacrament.

The horror of repeated falls is that they despise this friendship, nullify an efficacious remedy and violate a holy sacrament.

2. *Reconciliation violated:*

(a) Friendship and fidelity:

There is nothing more holy than friendship, with its inviolable rights. Love and fidelity establish it solidly. Affection unites hearts (David and Jonathan, 1 Kings 18. 1) and then fidelity institutes a pact between the friends which makes their friendship stand on a firm basis (1 Kings 18. 3). These two qualities should be found in any reconciled friendship, otherwise the last state of it is worse than the first. It needs great effort to pardon injuries, and therefore once friends are reconciled there should be even greater care to see to it that the friendship which is now re-bom between them has deeper roots than before.

(b) Reconciliation with God:

We were friends with God, he did not call us servants (John 15. 15). When we broke that friendship by sin Christ did not want to withdraw his grace from us or his mercy; instead he pardoned us a hundred thousand times in the sacrament of penance. Where is that redoubled effort to maintain this friendship which we owe him after such an act of mercy? God, on his side, has observed it perfectly, as we can see from the stories of the Magdalen, the lost sheep and the prodigal son. What have we done? He to whom God has pardoned greater faults should love him more. Do we observe that law of friendship? If we fall again repeatedly without any effort, then we break not merely the law of love but also that of fidelity to our promises.

(c) The pact with God:

i. *In the Old Testament* (Deut. 26. 17-18; 19. 1). The alliance between Moses (representing the Jewish people) and God; also that established once again after the captivity (Neh. 9. 38).

ii. *The pact of baptism and penance.* We also have made two pacts with God, one in baptism, the second in penance. The first lays the foundation of our friendship, but we break it, despising the blood of the Saviour. Our friendship is re-established through penance, restoring us our lost rights. In both cases the Mediator is Christ, he is our guarantor. If we break our word this second time we can expect God's vengeance, unless we repent sincerely.

3. *Medicine despised:*

God's general practice is to allow man to see how much he hates sin, otherwise, were he too patient, his goodness would not be reasonable, as Tertullian says *(Cont. Marc.* 1. 2. 6). He has known how to reconcile, in the one sacrament of penance, his justice and his mercy; by the one he gives pardon, by the other his aversion to sin is satisfied, because we have promised to hate it as he does and to avoid it. The two conditions are necessary, as we all know. There must be repentance (and forgiveness) together with a firm resolution to avoid sin. If we repeat our falls carelessly then God could say to us: I cure and preserve, I clean and fortify; but you honour me as a remedy and then despise me as a preventative. Why do you try to separate things which are inseparable?

4. *The sacrament profaned:*

Besides being a remedy it is also a sacrament, something holy which cannot be violated without profanation.

Tertullian says that we are like little fish, bom in the water and unable to live outside it. We are bom in the waters of baptism and we cannot live unless we 'keep our baptism', to use the phrase consecrated by tradition. If we lose it there is only one remedy, to enter into the water again through the sacrament of penance. However, there is a danger that we shall take advantage of this repeated mercy to indulge in repeated sins, converting the fountain of mercy into a stream of sacrilegious profanation.

(a) Pardon, daily more difficult:

What shall I say to you to prevent this profanation. Shall I say that God will not forgive you again? No; for that would be to deny the Gospel and the mercy of God. That he will deny you his graces in the future? How can I penetrate the secret designs of God's providence? No; I will say but this; that each time it will be more difficult to obtain pardon.

How easy everything was at our baptism, where no conditions were demanded at all! In penance, however, there are conditions; we have to be sorry for our sins and have a firm purpose of amendment. Why? Because of the law of which we have already spoken, which demands a greater effort once we have been reunited with God in friendship. Therefore, if we profane not merely baptism but also penance there will be greater demands made on us each time.

Do not say that you confess more easily every time; because that is just what I am afraid of and complain about; to see sinners who are not worried about their penance. They think that they can leave their burden in the confessional and return home without thinking of a change in their lives. I want to see sinners worried, I want to see them tremble and weep for their weakness. Then their bad

habits can be plucked out by the roots, because the force of their repentance will overcome that of their evil habits (cf. St Augustine in John tr. 49. 19).

(b) Virtue demands a permanent state:

Do you think that you can pass from virtue to vice? A Socrates or a Plato would tell you that virtue is not a passing fancy but demands constancy and a permanent state. Just because Christ has given us the sacraments which cleanse us from our crimes, are we going to be more blind than the philosophers, refusing to believe that virtue requires stability?

Listen to St Paul, who tells you that to fall again into our former faults is to distress the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4. 30). By that act we crucify again the Son of God (Heb. 6. 6).

You weep for the nations who are still in their infidelity, who do not as yet know Christ; well, St Peter will tell you that it is even worse to have known him, and his justice, and then to have abandoned his law, expressing himself in a phrase which one is almost ashamed to quote: die dog is back at his vomit again (2 Peter 2. 22).

But what does the Son of God say: that the devil, when he returns to his former abode, takes with him seven other spirits worse than himself.

SECTION VI. PAPAL TEXTS

A: The hatred of Satan and his tactics

The modern world is in a state of agitation which leads to a confusion between what is good and what is evil, together with a love of novelty. The forces of evil are solidly organized against us on all sides, while our arch enemy, the devil, tries his best to harm mankind by all the means at his disposal. Especially he relies on the misery and discouragement of those who are unemployed, to separate them from Christ. 'The spirit of evil relies on their misery and despair to separate them from Christ, the one and only Saviour, and to throw them into the stream of atheism and materialism, implicating them in the mechanisms of social organizations contrary to the order established by God' (Pius XII, Address to the Congress of social studies, June 1950).

The reserves of atheism are those who, without being atheists, live as if God did not exist. 'Few eras have proved as clearly as this one the truth of those words of Scripture that the whole world is concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes and the pride of life. Organized atheism, which presents itself as a political force, would not be so powerful if it could not rely, as a reserve and hope for the future, on those, and they are many, who without professing atheism—on the contrary, thinking themselves to be believers and

Christians—live their daily lives as if God did not exist' (Pius XII, Address to the German Catholics, 5 September 1950).

In the held of teaching, the enemy of God does all that he can to relegate to a subordinate position the teachings of the Church and the Gospel. Through the medium of newspapers, books, plays, the cinema, and even fashions the devil tries hard to attack the virtue of even very young people. In the face of this attack it is vital that both children and parents should be warned and armed against this error (Pius XII, in the canonization of S. Maria Goretti, 24 June 1950). In the schools much work can be done, slowly and imperceptibly, either for good or evil. 'Have you considered sufficiendy what an enviable field of activity has been given to you and with what an admirable ministry' you have been entrusted? For five or eight years you are in intimate contact with young people, you transmit to them useful and precious knowledge; at the same time, almost without feeling it, you give them an example of a Christian life totally dedicated to God and firmly rooted in the faith. An institution like the school works, as do the forces of nature, slowly and in an imperceptible manner, but constantly and with certainty of success, either for good or evil . . (Pius XII, to Catholic teachers and nurses, 6 September 1950).

B: He that is not with me is against me

The Popes have stressed repeatedly that the division of the world into two camps, those who are for God and those against him, is becoming increasingly obvious (cf. *Caritate Christi compulsi,* Pius XI; Pius XII, to the parish priests and Lenten preachers, 13 March, 1943). In such circumstances not to defend Christ is to fight under the banners of his enemies: Bring it home to their minds, as We ourselves have oftentimes conveyed the warning, that matters of the highest moment and worthy of all honour are at stake, for the safeguarding of which every and most toilsome effort should be made; and that a sublime reward is in store for the labours of a Christian life. On the other hand, not to do battle for Jesus Christ amounts to fighting against him: he himself assures us that he will deny before his Father in heaven those who shall have refused to confess him on earth. . . (Leo XIII, *Sapientiae Christianae,* 10 January 1891).

The present evils have come upon the world because men have separated themselves from Christ: All know the words of Holy Scripture: They that have forsaken the Lord shall be consumed, and even more the warning of Christ himself, Redeemer of men: Without me you can do nothing, and again: He that gathereth not with me, scattereth. These judgements of God are lessons for all time, but they are especially applicable in our days. Men have fallen away miserably from Jesus Christ, falling from their first

happiness into a slough of misery, and that is the reason of the failure of all they do to repair the ills and save something from the wreck (Pius XI, *Ubi Arcano Dei).*

C: Union is necessary to fight the strong one, armed

When the last end is at stake we must reject the treacherous insinuations of the tempter and join ourselves to the Church, openly confessing Christ. All must join forces to overcome militant atheism (Pius XI, *Mit brennender Sorge ;* Pius XII, radio message at Christmas i949).This unity of forces is absolutely necessary if we are to defeat rhe enemy; therefore the first requisite is that all differences should cease and we should not go into the arena separated one from the others, because that would mean fighting against God and not in union with the Church; this union of minds and hearts is effected by faith, hope and charity. 'Whence it appears how urgent is the duty to maintain perfect union of minds, especially in these times, when the name of Christian is assailed with designs so concerted and subtle. . . . This is not now the time and the place to inquire whether and how far the inertness and internal dissensions of Catholics have contributed to the present condition of things; but it is certain at least that the perverse-minded would exhibit less boldness, and would not have brought about such an accumulation of ills, if the faith which worketh by charity had been generally more energetic and lively in the hearts of men and had there not been so universal a drifting away from the divinely established rule of morality throughout Christianity' (Leo XIII, *Sapientiae Christianae).*

D : Under the guidance of the Church

1. This battle must be fought under the direction of the Church, otherwise there is a danger of over-dispersal of forces at our disposal. All must obey the voice of the Pope calling them to arms, because the necessary pre-requisite for a fruitful collaboration is this filial dependence on the ecclesiastical authorities (Pius XII, Allocution to Italian Catholic Action, 8 December 1953; to the French Bishops, 6 January 1945).

2. Catholic Action receives its mandate from the Bishops and must work in a spirit of true apostolate for the common good of all. (Pius XI, *Lactus sane nuntius).*

3. All works which tend to promote a greater Christian civilization cannot be independent of the ecclesiastical guidance, even though they have the responsibility for their Oλνη activities. It is, therefore, an error to suppose that the apostolate of the laity is not subordinated and submitted to the authority of the hierarchy, but should be considered as something parallel to it (Pius XII, to the I World Congress of the Lay Apostolate, 14 October 1951).

SECTION VII. SOME HISTORICAL NOTES

A: On silence

Decision of the Senate of Athens:

The Athenians had decided to build a sumptuous palace for public use. For this purpose two of the most famous architects were chosen. Being ordered to appear before the Senate to give their opinions about the work, and concerning the majesty, beauty and spaciousness of the projected building, one of them began to speak with such loquaciousness that he annoyed that venerable assembly. When the other was called on to give his opinion he did so in these brief words: T will do in actual work what this man has described in so many words? He was given the commission (Plutarch, *De op. bon. pro pop.).*

B: Diabolic possession

i. *Ancient testimonies:*

The existence of diabolic possession is proved, not merely by the Gospels but also through other later testimonies. The Fathers of the Church knew of these cases and intervened in some of them actively, curing the person when the pagan exorcists had failed, and doing so by a simple sign of the Cross.

Thus, St Justin is able to issue this challenge: You can prove what 1 say to you by observing what happens under your very eyes. In the whole world and in this very city there are many possessed by the devil who, after having seen the failure of your exorcists, magicians and enchanters, were cured and remain cured when ours, the Christians I mean, adjured them in the name of Jesus Christ, crucified under Pilate *{Apo.* 6. PG. 6, 453).

Tertullian, in his vibrant style, says: Let them bring here before your tribunal anyone who is possessed by the devil. As soon as he hears the command of any of the Christians this spirit will confess that he is a demon, just as before he lorded it as a god. . . . and if he does not confess that he is a devil, without daring to lie before a Christian, then shed the blood of that Christian for he is an imposter *{Apo.* 23, PL. i. 415).

2. *Modern testimonies:*

In more modern times the testimonies from missionary countries are numerous. Here is one taken from a letter of Fr Lacour to the famous Dr Winslow, recorded by Dr Calmet in his book *De la folie* (tome 2, p. 417): a youth of eighteen, after having made a sacreligious communion, ran away into the fields, calling himself Judas. The missionary, advised by the boy's parents of the strange phenomena they had observed in the boy, went to see him, rather

incredulous, but forced to believe by what he saw and heard. The possessed lad was talking in Latin. When the father addressed him he was lifted up in the air head down, and there he remained for half an hour. The devil was cast out of the boy by means of the usual exorcisms.

There is also the famous case of the possessed in the town of Ilfurt, in Alsace-Lorraine, who were cured by the invocation of the name of Mary Immaculate.

C: The devil in the lives of the saints

St Teresa of Avila, who was never given to imagination, mentions several times in her Life, the attacks of the devil against her. Some of these have already been mentioned (cf. p. 141) but there are other occasions when the saint saw the devil under various human forms, once as a little black figure, horrible to behold. She mentions the efficacy of holy water in getting rid of these apparitions. Once, when she was in the oratory saying her prayers, the devil appeared to her and came on to the book she was using at the time. Her words are these:

I was in an oratory: I had said one nocturn and was repeating some devotional prayers which follow it—we have them in our office-book—when actually the devil himself alighted on the book to prevent me from finishing the prayer. I made the sign of the Cross and he went away. I began again and he came back. I think I began that prayer three times and not until I had sprinkled some holy water on him could I finish it.

The life of the Curé d'Ars gives us a picture of the lengths to which the devil will go against holy people. At first, when these bodily manifestations began, the Curé was afraid—he was not yet used to Satan in person. Soon, however, he was to become very accustomed to him. Here are one or two incidents taken from his life:

Satan tried new pleasures. He set the bed curtains dancing, upset the chairs, disarranged the furniture. He hammered nails into the floor, plied saw, plane, hammer and axe as though he would smash the house to pieces. . . . One of the devil's very last tricks was to set fire to his bed in broad daylight. . . .'

We have the verbatim record of a conversation between the Curé and a possessed woman. It was on the afternoon of the 23rd of January, 1840, in the chapel of St John the Baptist, and eight others were present. The devil spoke through the mouth of this woman and poured out all his complaints against the saint:

You ugly black toad, how you make me suffer. . . . We war on one another. . . . But for all that it does sometimes happen that you work for me . . . Why do you examine the conscience of your penitents? Isn't what I make them do enough? You were anxious to

withdraw into solitude. Why don't you? Why do you rise so early? You are disobeying the bishop who has ordered you to take care of yourself. Why do you preach so simply? You pass for an ignorant man. Why don't you preach like a great man, as they do in the towns? Ah! How I delight in those great sermons which do no harm to anyone, but leave people to live in their own way and do what they like.

Another possessed woman declared to the saint: If there were three like you on earth, my kingdom would be destroyed. You have taken more than eighty' thousand souls from me (from *The Secret of the Curé d'Ars,* by Henri Ghéon. Sheed and Ward, London).

SECTION VIII. SERMON SCHEMES

I. LITURGICAL

Light in the Lord

i. *A fighting spirit:*

The Mass of today gives us, in the Proper, the foundation, the concrete application and the efficacious means to put into effect the programme of struggle and renunciation of sin which is proper to the season of Lent: Once you were all darkness; now', in the Lord, you are all daylight (Eph. 5. 8).

(a) Here is the foundation. In the liturgical assemblies in the Middle Ages there were present both penitents and catechumens. Here also perhaps there are some ... perhaps in sin . . . sunk in the depths of some illicit affection or dangerous occasion of sin. . . . You are all daylight, in the Lord.

(b) By baptism we have received the spirit of adoption (Rom. 8. 15). By the action of the same Spirit we become transfigured into the same likeness, borrowing glory from glory (2 Cor. 3. 18).

(c) And the Lord is light: There is one who enlightens every soul bom into this world: he was the true light (John 1. 9).

2. *Sons of the light:*

(a) You must Eve as men native to the light (Eph. 5.8).

i. This is a consequence of that which has been said before (Rom. 13. 12).

ii. Christ and sin are incompatible, like light and darkness.

(b) In today's epistle St Paul indicates the works of the light: Where the light has its effect all is goodness, and holiness and truth (Eph. 5. 9).

i. In the concrete he speaks of those things which the Christian must remove far from his life: debauchery, impurity of every kind and convetousness *(ibid.* v. 3); no indecent behaviour, no ribaldry or smartness in talk *(ibid.* 4).

ii. What he should practise, on the other hand: use his time well, live in charity, understand what is the will of God, be full of the Spirit of God *(ibid.* 16-20).

3. *The fight:*

(a) To walk as sons of the light it is necessary to fight.

i. The devil will not give up—he will return to his house (Luke it. 24).

ii. Woe to that man who, having once overcome the devil, allows himself to fall once more into his clutches. The last state of that man shall be worse than the first *(ibid.* 26).

(b) By baptism we overcome him—'Go forth unclean spirit' savs the Ritual.

i. But baptism demands that we fight all our lives; but it would be risky to fight alone; this battle is won by the strongest party.

ii. The devil is stronger than we are by nature and power, but we rely on the omnipotence of Jesus Christ—'one stronger than he.' United to Christ our victory is certain.

IL THE EPISTLE

A: Imitators of the Father

1. *First point:*

(a) The divine plan in the creation is to display the divine perfections in creatures, who all reflect, each in his own way, the infinite perfection of God.

(b) But in this plan God distinguished two kinds of creatures, the rational and the irrational.

i. Irrational creatures express the divine perfections by their very existence; the sea speaks to us of his immensity, the mountains of his stability; the universe of his divine wisdom and law.

ii. Rational creatures, over and above this, must also reflect God in their intellects and wills.

(c) How? By imitating God in those perfections which they can copy through their powers; this is a more perfect imitation because it copies the vital acts of God, above all, because it is freely willed.

(d) God has, moreover, lifted us up to the supernatural level, thus making our nature and its acts in a certain sense divine, and making even more perfect that imitation of him.

2. *Imitators of the Father:*

(a) St Paul does not merely say 'be imitators of God', but he explains that: as God's favoured children (Eph. 5. 1),

i. the gift of grace makes us sons of God;

ii. therefore it puts us in direct contact with the Father.

(b) Now, an essential condition of sons is that we should imitate the nature of the Father, and if this is perfect, then we must also imitate his virtues.

i. In the light of this principle we must understand the words of Christ: Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matt. 5. 48).

ii. He, as perfect son and image of the Father, could say: he who sees me sees the Father (John 14. 9).

3. *How are we to imitate the invisible Father?*

He has show us the wav. From all eternitv he had a Son who is his image; and this Son took flesh and a nature like ours, living among us; therefore to imitate the actions of Christ is to imitate the Father. This is now easier, because the model is visible and human.

4. *Imitate Christ in his love for the Father:*

(a) To imitate Christ seems at first sight difficult because he possessed all the virtues in their highest degree. However, St Paul indicates the short road to follow when he says that we should imitate that virtue which is the highest and the key to the others—Christ's love for the Father: Order your lives in charity, upon the model of that charity which Christ showed to us, when he gave himself up on our behalf. . . (Eph. 5. 1-3).

(b) The one reason for Christ's life was love:

i. For love of men the Father sent him to us, a man like ourselves (John 3. 16).

ii. For love of the Father Christ took flesh, ready in all things to do the Father's will (Heb. 10. 9), giving himself entirely for love of us (Gal. 2. 20).

(c) To imitate Christ means, then, to imitate this, his main virtue; at the same time it is to imitate God, who is love (1 John 4. 16).

5. *And in charity towards our neighbour:*

(a) St Paul indicates this: live in charity as Christ When he gave himself up on our behalf (v. 1).

(b) Charity has for its main object God; but it is no less certain that the love for our fellow men is:

i. the first effect of that charity, because all men are sons of God;

ii. it is easier, because of the social contacts with other men (1 John 3.15);

iii. it is the chief means through which God infuses into us the love of charity;

iv. Christ has promised happiness at the last day of judgement to those who have loved him in their fellow men (Matt. 25).

B: The sacrifice of love

1. *The sacrifice of love in Christ:*

(a) To urge us to practise charity St Paul proposes the example of Christ: Order your lives in charity, upon the model of that charity which Christ showed to us, when he gave himself up on our behalf, a sacrifice breathing out fragrance as he offered it to God (Eph. 5. 1-3).

i. He ottered it for love of us.

ii. It went up to God breathing out fragrance—that fragrance is the love for his Father, by means of which Christ's sacrifice was pleasing to God.

(b) We shall see how sacrifice is the symbol of love, to which it gives its efficacy.

2. *What is sacrifice:*

(a) The principal act of religion.

(b) In the Old and New Testaments the centre of religion is the temple, and the centre of the temple is the altar.

(c) Sacrifice is an act by which man wishes to express four things, which, at the same time, give sacrifice its value:

i. recognize the supreme sovereignty of God as Supreme Being;

ii. thank him for all his benefits;

iii. send up our petitions to God;

iv. make reparation before God for our sins against him.

3. *Sacrifice is the symbol of love:*

If we study these four effects as symbolized in the ceremonies of sacrifice we shall see that they are sustained by love, which is the secret of their efficacy.

(a) Recognize the supreme sovereignty of God:

i. Without love this becomes a simple act of submission of one who has been overcome through fear. When the sovereignty in question is based, as is that of God, on the fact that he has given us freely and lovingly our being and all that we have, then to recognize that fact without loving him would be an incomplete act and inefficacious.

ii. Remember how God rejected the sacrifices of the Jews who were his chosen people but who did not love him as they ought.

iii. The catechism and Jesus himself have changed the wording of the first commandment from 'the Lord thy God shalt thou adore' to 'thou shalt love the Lord thy God . . .' they are synonymous.

iv. The reason for this love becomes even more obvious when we think of the fact that his sovereignty is not merely that of a God but also that of a Father.

(b) Thanksgiving:

Unless this is accompanied by love it ceases to be real gratitude and becomes ingratitude in disguise.

(c) Petition:

i. λ\ e do not ask with confidence when we do not love the person whom we are petitioning.

ii. We ask God for things because we know that he loves us.

(d) Satisfaction:

It differs essentially from punishment, because it is voluntary.

i. If we want to see how satisfaction includes love we have only to remember the value of contrition and attrition; the latter, to receive pardon, needs to have recourse to the infinite merits of Christ in the sacrament of penance; without this, pardon is impossible. There is no intrinsic reason for forgiving one who asks pardon merely because he is afraid.

ii. Sacrifice gives God satisfaction in so far as it includes reparation, which implies love.

4. *Love in the sacrifice of Christ:*

It was the very motive of his sacrifice; with what love he must have offered himself who accepted the cross from the motive of love!

(a) Christ's love was infinite, because he knew infinitely the supreme love of the Father and the insult to that love implied by sin.

(b) To this love must be added his love for men, for whom he offered himself. The purpose of his sacrifice was not merely to honour the Father and repair the damage done to that honour by sin; he also intended our salvation.

5. *Love in our sacrifices:*

(a) When we assist at Mass do we realize that, in this sacrifice, Christ is repeating his love-offering, giving himself once again to the Father for love of us?

(b) To participate perfectly in that Holy Sacrifice we must reproduce in ourselves the double love of Christ, the High Priest; love for the Father and love for the neighbour.

i. Love for the Father, by asking Christ to join his infinite love with our poor efforts.

ii. Love for the neighbour, by living in charity.

C: The dangers of avarice

I. *Importance of this theme at the present time:*

(a) This you must know well enough, that nobody can claim a share in Christ's kingdom, God's kingdom, if he . . /has that love *of money which* makes a man an idolator (Eph. 5. 5).

(b) Avarice is the disordered love of temporal goods and desire for them.

We shall explain briefly its malice and evil effects, following St Paul and St Thomas.

2. *Definition of avarice:*

(a) Temporal goods are a means to an end; they are meant to make it possible for us to live according to our condition and state.

i. The means must be in proportion to thcend, justasamedicine must bear a relation to the illness it is destined to cure.

ii. When one desires to acquire or store up riches over and above this proportion between end and means, there is the sin of avarice.

(b) This lack of proportion can occur:

i. in the acquisition or storing up of material goods—acquiring and keeping more than is right and due to us, and this is directly a sin against our neighbour, because no one can have more than his share of riches without depriving others (St Th. 2-2. q. 118. *a.* I. *ad 21m)*\

ii. in so far as one has too much love for them, in which case the miser sins against himself, and also against God, since he gives more value to material goods than to those which are eternal.

3. *The evil of avarice:*

(a) St Paul says that the miser is like an idolater; St Thomas explains this when he describes avarice as a captial sin;

(b) A sin is called 'capital' when it leads us to commit many others as means to attain that which we desire.

i. Happiness is the end desired by all, therefore the more we place our happiness in any particular good so much the more do we love that good, and desire it; and so many more are the means we shall use to attain it.

ii. Now, the miser considers that money is the source of all happiness and to him it is the good which will satisfy all his desires; from which it is easy to see why avarice leads to many other sins.

(c) It is a kind of idolatry, because the miser substitutes for God this temporal thing, the Supreme Good for a material one. It has taken God's place in his heart.

4. *Evils of avarice:*

(a) The miser is like the idolater, not so much because he adores money, but because he adores it with all his heart, mind, soul and will:

i. as if money were his God;

ii. from which comes an infinity of evils.

(b) St Paul gives a summary of these when he says: Those who would be rich fall into temptation, the devil's trap for them; all

those useless and dangerous appetites which sink men into ruin here and perdition hereafter. The love of money is a root from which every kind of evil springs, and there are those who have wandered away from the faith by making it their ambition, involving themselves in a world of sorrows (1 Tim. 6. 9).

5. *All these evils come from one fact:*

Avarice takes possession of a man completely, so much so that he is blind to the harm it does him, to the evils which he is seeking and the harm he does to others and their hatred of him; we shall limit ourselves to a brief summary of the principal evils it causes:

(a) It blinds a man ...

Pluto, god of riches in the Greek and Roman mythology, was blind.

i. The miser does not see the supernatural harm he is doing to himself; he does not see heaven and he loses it; 'he sacrifices heavenly imperishable riches; he has eyes and does not see; he abandons the true good for the false; that which lasts for that which will pass; heaven for earth' (St Cyril, *Hom.* 7).

ii. *Which do you choose?* To love temporal things which pass with time or not love them and live eternally with God in heaven: (St Augustine, *Sermo.* 28. *de verb. Domini).*

iii. He does not see the temporal misery in which he lives (cf. Eccles. 5. 12, 15-16).

iv. Avarice demands more labour than God demands; whose yoke is sweet and burden light.

(b) It makes a man unjust and rapacious; he no longer thinks of the rights of others. If, for the Fathers of the Church, not to give alms is to steal, what must be said about the miser. The rich man in the Gospel died and was buried in hell (Luke 16. 22).

(c) It hurls man into the most horrible crimes, wars, treachery, hatred between brothers, murder . . . Judas.

(d) It makes a man ungrateful and envious; ungrateful to God and envious of his fellow men.

D: Indecent speech

I. *Introduction:*

(a) In today's epistle St Paul admonishes us to practise the virtue of purity, not merely in thought and deed, but also in speech: There must be no whisper of it among you; it would ill become saints; no indecent behaviour, no ribaldry or smartness in talk . . . (Eph. 5. 3-4)

2. *Indecent words and jokes:*

(a) If we look for the real reason why such things are forbidden by Christian morality we see that:

i. some arc obscene in themselves; they manifest a heart given over to impurity;

ii. others are related to impurity as to their end in view. Therefore they should not be found in a Christian because they are either sins themselves or at least lead to sin as an occasion of it.

3. *The morality of them:*

(a) The rules arc clear. Such indecent jokes and conversations produce themselves almost by spontaneous generation in the world in which we live. This may explain them—but it does not justify them.

(b) They can be sins in several ways:

i. because of the danger they may bring to ourselves;

ii. because of their purpose—if they are pronounced to seduce others or lead them into sin then they are gravely sinful;

iii. because of the scandal we may give by them, especially to young people.

(c) A necessary distinction:

i. if the words are only slightly obscene or objectionable, then there is no grave sin, provided we can rule out scandal;

ii. if being gravely obscene, they are spoken jocosely, with no evil intentions, then they constitute a venial sin, normally speaking.

(d) With regard to obscene conversations or jokes, we may say that:

i. they can be sinful, and gravely so, if the one who hears them uses them to commit sin or takes sinful pleasure in them;

ii. the person who listens to them from human respect, smiles at them and perhaps joins in the conversation does not usually sin gravely provided always that scandal is excluded;

iii. the same can be said of those who listen to such things out of curiosity.

E: Do not allow anyone to cheat you

I. *A warning:*

(a) St Paul gives this warning several times, referring to the Roman and Greek civilization, which represented vice as something elegant, a social virtue almost, or even in some cases a religious one.

(b) It is a feature of all times, not merely those of Greece and Rome, and is common today when evil is often represented as good and beautiful. Modern social conditions, aesthetic taste, greater liberty—all these are urged as motives to justify vice and evil.

i. Literature often seeks the lowest depths of depravity under the guise of realism.

ii. Divorce is praised in literature and on the screen and preached in theory.

iii. Abortion is part of the code of law in many countries.

2. *The warning of the Church:*

Against all this the Church makes her own the words of St Paul: Do not allow anyone to deceive you. There is only one moral law for all time; sin is the same now as it was hundreds of years ago; evil is not beautiful and even if it were, that would not justify it.

3. *Careful vigilance of the essentials:*

(a) Morality is one and the same for all ages:

i. The Greek and Roman civilizations were corrupt, yet the Church did not compromise with them, nor does she do so now.

ii. Accidental moral laws may change (e.g. the age for marriage, the economic rights of women) but the essential laws are the same for ever. To claim that these can change is heresy or even perhaps apostasy, since it supposes: (a) that good and evil have no definite frontiers, no supreme norm of morality; *(b)* that there is no Supreme Legislator who has given us a rigid code of commandments, from which not one jot or tittle can be removed (Matt. 5. 18).

(b) The Catholic doctrine is unchangeable:

i. What is essentially evil will always be so. Today's epistle gives us the limits of evil (Eph. 5. 4-5).

ii. All that puts us in danger of falling into that evil must be avoided *(ibid.* 5-6).

(c) God has not changed; neither has human nature:

If thy right eye is the occasion of thy falling into sin, pluck it out and cast it from thee; better to lose one part of thy body than to have the whole cast into hell (Matt. 5. 29). Could we find a stronger phrase to indicate the necessity of prescinding from everything which may cause us to sin, even though the world may judge it to be useful?

4. *Without due order there can be no beauty:*

(2l) If anyone should say to you that what is evil can also be beautiful, deny it; because frequently the name of beauty is but a disguise for something evil, something which satisfies our baser instincts, although we do not want to give it its right name.

(b) Beauty, we are told, is the splendour of right order—and although a thing may have exterior beauty merely, if the moral beauty is missing, if there is moral evil beneath it, with everything that supposes in terms of ingratitude to God, rebellion against our supreme benefactor etc., then there is no true beauty except for those who do not know what truth means.

III. THE GOSPEL

A: Christ, our Captain

1. *Unity of the text:*

There is more unity in the text of today's Gospel than would appear at first sight. It has three parts:

(a) the miracle;

(b) the doctrine of Christ based on the miracle;

(c) the intervention of a woman in the crowd.

It is yet another Gospel concerning the kingdom of God, by which phrase we can understand either the Church militant or the kingdom of grace in the faithful. The main point is to be found in verse 20. But if, when I cast out devils, I do it through God's power, then it must be that the kingdom of God has suddenly appeared among you (Luke 11. 20).

2. *The miracle:*

Jesus cured the man who was deaf and dumb. These ills were the effect, in this case, of diabolic possession. The real miracle here was the driving out of the devil, and that is the cause of the discussion.

3. *The division of opinions:*

As so often happened with our Lord's miracles, his hearers were divided. The common people, simple folk as they were, recognized at once the miraculous nature of what had happened and proclaimed our Lord as the Son of David (Matt. 12. 23). They wanted to know if this man was the Messias. The Scribes and Pharisees attribute his power to the devil; while others, without going so far, ask him for a sign from heaven, as if he had not just given them one. They try to undo the effect of the miracle on the people by suggesting that it is not enough by itself.

4. *The doctrine of Jesus:*

Taking advantage of the miracle and the discussion, our Lord teaches his doctrine.

(a) He admits that there is such a thing as the kingdom of Satan (Luke 11. 18).

(b) He declares that this kingdom cannot be divided against itself, because otherwise it would perish (Luke 11. 17).

(c) But another kingdom has been promised by the prophets, and this one will fight against the kingdom of the devil. That is the sense of verse 20; the kingdom of God has arrived, and that is proved by the miracle.

i. If we understand by the kingdom of God the Church militant then the meaning is: The founder of this Church is among you. The Church will be born among the Jewish people.

ii. If by the kingdom of God we understand the reign of grace in the hearts of the faithful, then the meaning is that the author of that grace has now appeared.

(d) Christ presents himself as the Captain of the kingdom of God who has come to overthrow the chief of the kingdom of this world. He presents himself as a victorious captain, who strips of his arms the captain of the opposing forces and shares the spoils of victon'. The captain who possessed the world up to now was strong; he is stronger (Luke 21. 22).

5. *Three great principles:*

Our Lord lays down three great truths with regard to this struggle:

(a) The world was at peace; but it was a false peace, based on violence:

i. Peace supposes two elements, tranquillity and order; it is not enough to have tranquillity, the things that are tranquil must also be ordered.

ii. Tranquillity existed in the world, but not order; it was the tranquillity of a people sunk in sin.

iii. He had come to destroy that peace in the consciences of the individuals and in that of nations.

(b) All must choose the ranks under which they are to fight; they will either be for Christ or against him; there is no longer any middle way.

i. He demands a positive allegiance to his person; with no possibility of neutrality;

ii. nor is there any room for cunning diplomacy (Luke 11. 24-26).

(c) No one can shout definite victory in this life.

i. While we live we shall be at war with a cunning and a powerful enemy who will redouble his efforts and the violence of his attacks.

ii. His second victory could have worse consequences than his first (Luke 11. 24-26).

6. *I have come to bring a state of war:*

It is necessary to expand this idea a little.

(a) The world did not know true peace before the coming of Christ. The prophets denounced the evil many times:

i. How we long for better times, and no relief comes to us; for remedy at last, and danger still threatens (Jerem. 8. 15).

ii. Crave we light, and nothing see but darkness; hope we for dawn and walk in dusk (Isaias 59. 9).

(b) Christ, in order to achieve the true and lasting peace, had to destroy the false peace which apparently existed.

i. In that sense he proclaimed himself enemy of that peace:

Do you think that I have conic to bring peace on earth? No, believe me, I have come to bring dissension (Luke 12. 51).

ii. He came to divide those who lived in the same house; if necessary even to separate sons and parents: Henceforth five in the same house will be found at variance, three against two and two against three; the father will be at variance with his son, and die son with his father; the mother against her daughter and the daughter against her mother (Luke 12. 52-53).

(c) Having destroyed the false peace, our Lord established on earth the true peace which the world did not know. For that reason the word 'peace' appears at the very beginning of the Gospel.

i. On the night of his birth : 'Peace on earth to men of good will' was the song of the angels (Luke 2. 14).

ii. The last will and testament of Christ to his Apostles was : Peace is my bequest to you, and the peace which I give you is mine to give; I do not give peace as the world gives it (John 14. 27).

iii. Finally, as soon as he had risen he appeared to his disciples and said: Peace be to you (Luke 24. 36). He sent them the Holy Spirit whose first three fruits are charity, joy, peace.

7. *lam the prince ofpeace:*

This Captain declares the most ferocious, lasting and terrible war that has ever been known.

In comparison with it all other wars are as nothing. This struggle between Christ and the Prince of Darkness will last until the end of time, it will be universal and it will have eternal effects.

B : The Eternal King

i. *To be with Christ:*

He who is not with me is against me (Luke 11. 23).

(a) No one should imagine that the essence of the Christian militia lies in propaganda and organization—it is the spirit which really matters. Propaganda without this inner spirit is like the dead fig tree in the Gospel.

(b) Christ, our Captain, calls everybody and each has a place in his army. We must not be deaf to his call. This is the theme of the famous Ignatian meditation:

i. the king offers the highest ideal which could be imagined—nothing less than to conquer the whole earth;

ii. the arms by which this is to be accomplished are work by day and watching by night; to follow the king in his sorrow so to follow him also in his glory;

iii. to those soldiers whom he loves most the king extends a special invitation, to go against their own sensuality and against any mortal worldly love, in order to follow him along the path of self-abasement, self-denial and humility.

2. *The value of humility:*

(a) The efficacy of our arms will depend on the degree of our union with Christ, our Head. In order to unite ourselves with him we must die to ourselves; i.e. achieve the virtue of humility, which is the negative foundation of our sanctification.

(b) To acquire humility the best method is humiliation. The soldier of Christ has to be truly poor in spirit; poor in his own spirit, rich in the spirit of God, as St Augustine says.

3. *The two standards:*

The substance of this famous Ignatian meditation lies in the comparison between the methods used by Satan to enrol souls under his banner and those employed by Christ to make them soldiers in his army.

(a) Satan tempts them first of all by means of riches, then honours, in order to lead them to pride, from which follow all other sins and vices; there are then three steps in his battle order:

i. riches,
ii. honours,
iii. pride.

(b) Christ, on the other hand, recommends poverty of spirit first of all, from which will follow real poverty' and then humility. There are, again, three steps:

i. poverty of spirit,
ii. real poverty,
iii. humility.

4. *The three types of soul:*

Always a realist, St Ignatius does not want anyone to deceive himself and believe that he has made good resolutions when, in fact, he has made nothing of the kind. He offers for our consideration three types of souls:

The three state that they are ready for action;

(a) But the first puts off the execution of his resolution from one day to the next, and carries on like that to the day of his death; always decided in words but never in action.

(b) The second type does not say *I would like* ... as does the first; he says *I will to* .... But he puts conditions to God, he wants what God wills, but at the same time he also wants what will satisfy his self-love. He wants God to come to him rather than be disposed to go directly to God.

(c) The third type says that he is prepared and he really is; he does not retain any affection for any human thing; but instead he lives, thinking only of God's will.

5. We may end this scheme with the text of St Ignatius' offering of oneself to God: Eternal Lord of all things, with your help and

favour I make my offering before your infinite goodness and before your glorious Mother and all the saints of the heavenly court; that I desire, wish and determine, if it is to your greater honour and glory, to imitate you in suffering all manner of injuries, abuse, calumny and poverty, actual as well as spiritual, if your Majesty will accept me and establish me in this state of life.

C: Confirmation

1. *Confirmation and baptism:*

(a) In baptism the words of today's Gospel are brought to reality: When a strong man, fully armed, mounts guard over his own palace, his goods are left in peace; but when a man comes who is stronger, still, he will take away all the armour that gave him confidence, and divide among others the spoils he has won (Luke 11. 21). The reign of the strong one is defeated by the action of the sacrament: the ritual of baptism says to the devil: Go out of him, unclean spirit.

(b) In confirmation the defeat of the devil is even more complete. Through this sacrament the Christian receives the fortitude necessary to fight as a soldier of Christ.

2. *Confirmation: the sacrament of fortitude:*

(a) Symbolized by the sign of the cross:

i. In confirmation the Christian receives the sign of the cross on his forehead—an action which signifies the strength given him in this sacrament, just as a soldier is marked with the sign of his leader.

ii. In confirmation we are strengthened for the fight, and the sign of that strength should be worn on the forehead as in a visible place (3. q. 72. a. 9. *ad iuni).*

(b) Confirmation produces strength—the virtue of fortitude:

i. The sacrament gives the spiritual strength which the rite itself signifies. The spiritual life is brought, as it were, to adult perfection.

ii. St Thomas quotes a letter of Pope Melchiades: The Holy Ghost... in confirmation gives us an increase of grace. In baptism we are born to a new life; in confirmation we are strengthened for the fight; in baptism we are washed; in confirmation we are fortified (3. q. 72. a. 4.C).

3. *Fullness of grace and the Holy Spirit:*

(a) Why does confirmation make us strong and perfect Christians? Because it gives us the fullness of grace and of the Holy Spirit.

i. it is the sacrament of fullness of grace (2. q. 72. a. 1. *ad 4um)*\

ii. the fullness of the Spirit is given by it *{ibid. ad iuni)*\

iii. these are given to bring man spiritually to an adult state of life.

(b) The Holy Spirit, who changed the cowardice of the apostles into a surprising spiritual strength, descends also on the Church and on those who are confirmed.

We receive the same gift which they received at Pentecost, but not in the same way (theirs came in the rushing wind and the parted tongues of fire; ours in the sacrament of confirmation). It is the same Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus; who came on him at his baptism, led him into the desert, fortified him for the fight, for his work and for the cross. When he came upon the Apostles he did the same thing; and so he does to us when we receive him in confirmation.

4. *Learn to appreciate this sacrament to the full:*

(a) Many take little or no notice of confirmation; some even receive it without really knowing what it is or what it does.

(b) Remember your confirmation; that day the Holy Spirit came upon you in a special way and gave you all the graces you need to be strong and perfect in the faith. The 'stronger than he' then came to your help and with him you too, can overcome the devil.

D: The false peace of sinners

1. *False spiritual peace:*

The strong man armed in the Gospel of today is the devil, the stronger than he is Christ. Our Lord tells us that, while the strong man rules, then he keeps those subject to him in a certain state which resembles peace; he has them terrified and dominated. But when Christ cames, as he does, to knock at the sinners' hearts, then there is bound to be war. Let us examine more in detail this false peace of the sinner.

2. *The devil procures the peace of the sinner:*

(a) St Teresa says: God preserve you from many kinds of peace experienced by worldly people! God forbid that you should ever know these, because they bring perpetual war. When some worldly person, deeply involved though he is in sin, leads a very placid life and rests so contented in his vices that he never feels the prick of conscience, this peace, as you will have read, is a sign that he is on good terms with the devil. For as long as such folk live, the devil will not make war on them because if he did, they would return some part of the way to God out of their very wickedness—not because they love Him, that is to say, but to save themselves strife *(Conceptions of the love of God,* ch. 2. 1).

(b) The devil procures this peace:

i. because these sinners are his already;

ii. he has stripped them of all that matters and therefore there is no need for him to attack them further. As St John Chrysostom says: those who sail in an empty boat do not fear the attacks of

pirates because they do not attack in order to destroy a boat which has nothing in it. Pirates look for gold, silver, precious stones; thus the devil docs not go after the sinner, but after the just, where he will find great riches *(Hom.* 4. *Vidi Dominum).*

(c) He defends it when it is attacked:

When the voice of conscience begins to make itself heard, the devil then tries to make it keep silent with a thousand reasons; here are some:

i. concessions which must be made to youth;

ii. death is still a long way away;

iii. there are many who live this way;

iv. excessive confidence in God's mercy;

v. he tries to invade them with new pleasures, real or imaginary;

vi. he ties them down with worldly affairs, so as not to give them time to attend to the call of God to repentance.

3. *This is a false peace:*

(a) because, according to St Augustine:

i. those who have true peace have their appetites subject to reason, becoming kingdoms of God in which everything is well ordered and in which that which is the chief part of man (the reason) dominates that which is lower, while submitting itself to one who is higher, to Christ;

ii. this is the peace which is given on earth to men of good will (cf. *Serm. Dni in monte.* 1. 1);

iii. if the true peace is the fruit of justice, then the true spiritual peace will also be the result of that spiritual justice of which St Augustine speaks.

(b) The book of Wisdom describes the state of those who live in this false peace: Nor were they content with these false notions of God's nature, living in a world besieged by doubt, they misnamed its innumerable disorders a state of peace (Wis. 14. 22).

(c) It is not a true peace by reason of its very superficiality—it remains in the senses, without ever penetrating the depths of the soul.

(d) Finally, it is false, because it is not lasting. It will soon find itself justly disturbed by death and the fear of the judgement, and eternally by the torments of hell, in which the devil tortures the damned for all the false peace he has granted them in this life. God allows us to live in eternal peace as a reward for the war against ourselves and the evil which we have had to fight here.

E: Blessed is the womb that bore thee

I. *The circumstances:*

When our Lord had finished his argument against the Scribes and the Pharisees a simple woman in the crowd gave voice to the

common opinion of those around our Lord: Blessed is the womb that bore thee, the breast which thou hast sucked (Luke 11. 27). Christ does not reprimand her for the praise given to his Mother, but he does give a correction in a spiritual sense to what she has said: Shall we not say, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it?

2. *Christ does not establish a comparison:*

The text and context give us the clear meaning ofwhat he says. This poor woman did not know anything about the divine Motherhood of Mary, therefore it is clear that our Lord, in his reply, would not be referring dir ctly to that Maternity', the root of all our Lady's graces. The two extremes of the comparison he makes, therefore are these; on the one hand maternity in the purely material sense and the practical faith together with good works which prove and come from the spiritual maternity] by which one conceives in the heart the words of God's revelation, feeds them and makes them bear fruit.

3. *He underlines the blessing common to all:*

(a) In praising his Mother the woman in the crowd gives our Lord an occasion for praising the blessing which is common to all, teaching us the way to attain it.

(b) Here is what St Peter Canisius says: The Lord makes a general observation which will be of value to all his hearers, and on the occasion of the words of the woman, he gives the rule which it is necessary to know and to observe to live well and in happiness, so that no one would think that Mary is the only one who is blessed on this earth or in heaven (*De Maria Virg.* p. 4, sect. 2, ch. 23).

4. *Implicitly our Lord praises the double blessedness of Mary:*

(a) The blessedness she has by reason of the divine maternity—a blessedness which our Lord does not deny, rather he affirms it and takes it for granted.

(b) Our Lady's blessedness is superior to that of all other angels and saints because she has heard the word of God and kept it better than all of them. In her that w'ord has produced the most excellent fruits. Did not St Elizabeth say to Mary: Blessed art thou for thy believing: No one heard the word of God and kept it as as well as Mary, his Mother.

F: An army in battle array

i. *The Encyclical* Sapientiae Christianae *of Leo XIII:*

The schemes which have gone before show us the true meaning and interpretation of this important encyclical, which has for its theme the words of today's Gospel: he who is not with me is against me (Luke 11. 23). It is the fundamental document for Catholic Action of all kinds. Here is a brief scheme of its main themes:

2. *The duties of Christians to the Church:*

The reign of Christ is one of truth and love; he has left in his Church as a perpetual patrimony these same qualities, truth and charity.

3. All who can do so, therefore, must be prepared to take up the 'sword of truth' in defence of the Church. The Pope asks for the co-operation of all in this work, each one in his own degree and according to his talents and possibilities.

This is supported by a quotation from St Thomas (2-2. q. 3. a. 2, *ad 2inn* and by another from the Council of the Vatican: All faithful Christians, but those chiefly who are in a prominent position, or engaged in teaching, we entreat, by the compassion of Jesus Christ, and enjoin by the authority of the same God and Saviour, that they bring aid to ward off and eliminate these errors from Holy Church, and contribute their zealous help in spreading abroad the light of undefiled faith *(const. Dei Filius)*.

4. The Pope then speaks of a characteristic of Catholic Action—organization.

It is not right that Catholics should go into the arena separated one from the others; there must be unity of mind and heart: ... Not only is the Church a perfect society far excelling every other, but it is enjoined by her Founder that, for the salvation of mankind, she is to contend as an army set in array. The organization and constitution of Christian society can in no wise be changed, neither can any one of its members live as he may choose, nor select that mode of fighting which best pleases him. For in effect he scatters and gathers not who gathers not with the Church and with Jesus Christ, and all who fight not jointly with him and with the Church are in very truth contending against God.

5. *The duty of obedience:*

This obedience to the Pope and the Bishops appointed to rule the Church under him is a characteristic note of all good Catholics. The encyclical makes a reference to past cowardice and discord on the part of some, and calls for its remedy in the future.

6. In the last section of the encyclical the Pope warns nations that they will be punished by God for having abandoned him and that the Church will be victorious in the end: Nor is it to be doubted that special aid of the great God will be vouchsafed, so long as the struggle endures, to the flock and to the pastors.

The Fourth Sunday of Lent

THE MULTIPLICATION OF THE LOAVES

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: Gal. 4. 22-31. Gospel: John 6. 1-15 (Matt. 14. 13-21 ; Luke 9. 10-17).

Texts with reference to God's mercy

i. *The mercy of God:*

(a) In the historical books:

Love me and keep my commandments, and mercy shall be thine a thousandfold. Ex. 20. 6.

Thus the Lord passed by, and he cried out, It is the Lord God, the ruler of all things, the merciful, the gracious; slow to take vengeance, rich in kindness, faithful to his promises. Thousands can tell of his unfailing pity, how patient he is with the sinner, and pardons the guilt of his wrong-doing; yet, before him, none can claim innocence in his own right, and when he punishes, the son must make amends for the father's guilt, to the third and the fourth generation. Ex. 34. 6-8. Cf. Num. 14. 18.

Lord, he said, thou hast right on thy side; no reward of thine but is deserved, no act of thine but tells of mercy, of faithfulness, and of justice. Tob. 3. 2.

(b) In the psalms:

I, then, encompassed by thy mercy, will betake myself to thy house (5. 8).

Lord, turn back, and grant a wretched soul relief; as thou art ever merciful, save me (6. 5).

Give heed no more to the sins and follies of my youth, but think mercifully of me, as thou, Lord, art ever gracious (24. 7).

Blessed be the Lord; so wondrous is his mercy, so strong the wall of his protection (30. 22).

Compassion he loves, and the just award, the whole earth overflows with the Lord's goodness (32. 5).

Lord, let thy mercy rest upon us, who put all our trust in thee (32. 22).

Lord, thy mercy is high as heaven; thy faithfulness reaches to the clouds (35. 6). Cf. 56. ii.

Have mercy on me, O God, as thou art ever rich in mercy; in the abundance of thy compassion, blot out the record of my misdeeds (50. 3).

To thee, Lord, mercy belongs; thou wilt repay every man the reward of his deeds (61. 13).

Have mercy, O Lord; for mercy I plead continually ... who is so kind and forgiving, Lord, as thou art, who so rich in mercy to all who invoke him? (85. 4-5). Cf. 85. 15.

Is he not a loving Lord to all his creation; does not his mercy reach out to all that he has made? (114. 9).

(c) In the sapiential books and the prophets:

God of our fathers, Lord of all mercy, thou by thy word hast made all things . . . Wis. 9. 1.

His to pity, his to punish; intercession avails with him, but in full flood comes his vengeance. Ecclus. 16. 12.

Listen while I tell again the story of the Lord's mercies, what renown the Lord has won; all the Lord has done for us, all the wealth of blessings his pardoning love, his abounding pity has lavished on the race of Israel. Isaias 63. 7. Cf. Dan. 9. 9; Hab. 3. 2.

(d) Mercy in the Gospels:

He has mercy on those who fear him. ... He has protected his servant Israel, keeping his merciful design in remembrance. . . . So he would carry out his merciful design towards our fathers. . . . Such is the merciful kindness of our God, which has bidden him come to us, like a dawning from on high... . Luke 1. 50, 54, 72, 77, 78.

Be merciful, then, as your Father is merciful. Luke 6. 36.

Go home and find out what the words mean, It is mercy that wins favour with me, not sacrifice. I have come to call sinners, not the just. Matt. 9. 13.

2. *Qualities of the divine mercy:*

There, in the heavens, thou hast framed a design of everlasting mercy; there thy faithful promise rests. Ps. 88. 3.

Praise the Lord, the Lord is gracious; his mercy endures for ever. Ps. 105. 1.

But do thou, my Lord and Master, take my part, to defend thy own honour; no mercy is so tender as thine. Ps. 108. 21.

And he has mercy ever at his side, a God merciful as he is great. Ecclus. 2. 23.

Come back to the Lord your God; he is ever gracious and merciful, ever patient and rich in pardon; threatens he calamity, even now he is ready to forgive. Joel 2. 13.

How rich God is in mercy, with what an excess of love he loved us! Eph. 2. 4.

The merciless will be judged mercilessly; mercy gives its judgement an honourable welcome. James 2. 13.

3. *The mercy of God for men:*

Thy mercy had delivered Israel; thy mercy should be their guide; thy strong arms should carry them to the holy place where thou dwellest. Ex. 15. 13.

Listen to these decrees, be true to them, and live by them, and the Lord thy God will be true to his covenant with thee, to the merciful promise which he made to thy fathers. Dt. 7. 12.

He it is that has scourged us for our sins; he it is that will deliver us in his mercy. Tob. 13. 5.

Abundant has his mercy been towards us; the Lord remains faithful to his word for ever. Ps. 116. 2.

Peace and pardon to all those who follow this rule, to God's true Israel. Gal. 6. 16.

In accordance with his own merciful design he saved us, with the cleansing power which gives us new birth, and restores our nature through the Holy Spirit, shed on us in abundant measure through our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Tit. 3. 5-6.

Blessed be that God, that Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy has begotten us anew, making hope live in us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 1 Peter 1.3.

To maintain yourselves in the love of God, and wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with eternal life for your goal. Jude 21.

4. *Mercy for the neighbour:*

Nay, who defies the Lord's vengeance more surely than friend who refuses compassion to a friend? Job 6. 14.

Two things must never leave thee, kindness and loyalty; be these the seals that hang about thy neck, graven be this inscription with thy heart for tablet. Prov. 3. 3.

Shame on the man who holds his neighbour in contempt; mercy to the poor brings a blessing. Mercy he loves who puts his trust in the Lord. Prov. 14. 21. Cf. Prov. 14. 22; 21. 22. Ecclus. 18. 12.

Heart full of kindness and hand full of comfort will keep the commandment, Lend to thy neighbour. Ecclus. 29. 1. Cf. 18. 12, 13.

Blessed are the merciful; they shall obtain mercy. Matt. 5. 7.

Woe upon you, Scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites that will award to God his tithe, though it be of mint or dill or cummin, and have forgotten the weightier commandments of the law, justice, mercy and honour; you did ill to forget one duty while you performed the other. Matt. 23. 23.

And he arose, and went on his way to his father. But, while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and took pity on him: running up he threw his arms round his neck and kissed him. Luke 15. 20.

As for your brother, if he is at fault tax him with it, and if he is sorry for it, forgive him. Luke 17. 3.

Be kind and tender to one another, each of you generous to all, as God in Christ has been generous to you. Eph. 4. 32.

You are God's chosen people, holy and well-beloved; the livery you wear must be tender compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; . . . the Lord's generosity to you must be the model of yours. Col. 3. 12.

SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LITURGICAL

According to Schuster, the Roman liturgy, following the Byzantine, consecrated this Sunday to the celebration of the triumph of the Cross. For this reason the stational Church is that of the Holy Cross where, since the time of St Helen, a large portion of the True Cross has been preserved. It is also called *Laetare* Sunday, from the first words of the Introit. Again according to Schuster, it is possible that the joy reflected in today's Mass may derive from the ancient Byzantine feasts of mid-Lent or from the ancient Roman custom of celebrating the beginning of the Fast, which, before the Council of Nicaea, started three weeks before Easter.

It is also called Rose Sunday, from the custom which began in the time of Leo IX of blessing a rose on this day. The rose, made of gold, was carried by the Pope in procession to the Basilica and, after the Mass, was presented by him to the Prefect of Rome. Undoubtedly there is some mystical significance in this ceremony, but authors are divided as to its real meaning. Perhaps the best interpretation of it is that it signifies the joy which is the key-note of today's celebrations. The prayers for the blessing of the rose are full of this idea.

It is also known as the Sunday of the five loaves, from the Gospel. This passage from the Scriptures increases our joy because it reminds us of the Eucharist, so closely linked with the celebration of Easter. Pius Parsch calls this the Eucharistic Sunday.

II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

A: The Epistle: Gal. 4. 22-31

i. *Occasion and argument:*

St Paul was at Ephesus, writing his letters to the Corinthians. But they were not the only ones who worried him at the time, because he had just received news of a very dangerous situation

which had arisen among the Galatians, a situation bordering on heresy this time,

Who were these Galatians? We do not know for certain, but they were inhabitants of the southern part of Galacia, possibly of French descent, certainly Gentiles. They were recent converts and now, at this moment, a minority, more or less large, was on the point of giving up the true faith.

The motive was the usual one; the Jewish doctors of the law who did all they could to discredit St Paul and his teaching, saying that he was a man who went from one opinion to another in the question of circumcision and that he was an apostle of second rank only, who had not received his doctrine from Christ himself. They also said that he mixed Christianity with Judaism, by admitting Hebrew feasts and also circumcision as a kind of sacrament.

This explains why St Paul writes to these Gentiles in the Jewish style, using the books of the Law and rabbinical arguments. It is interesting to notice how here, as in other places in his writings (for example, i Cor. io. i-ii; Rom. 9. 6-13; Gal. 3. 6-9), St Paul narrates the facts of the Old Law as types or figures of the New and especially as referring to the iVlessias and his era. St Paul can claim the merit of having explained many of these types or figures which abounded in the history of the Jews.

In this passage he finds in the history of Agar and Sara with their two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, the norm ofconduct which the Galatians should observe with regard to these Jewish preachers who were doing them so much harm. To get the exact sense of this passage it is necessary' to take into consideration verse 21 which is not included in the Liturgy·: Tell me, you yvho are so eager to have the layv for your master, have you never read the layv? Then he goes on to point the parallel. Abraham had tyvo wives, one free, Sara, and a son who yvas also free; the other Agar, yvho yvas a slave together with her offspring, Ishmael. The latter represent the present-day Judaism. You, on the contrary·, are true sons of Christ and freemen. Do you now wish to live under the slavery' of the layv?

M

•i

Ch

The Texts

1. *Abraham had two sons:*

The sons of Abraham inherited, according to the common layv in this position, yvhen a man could have more than one wife, the social status of their mothers. What is more, the birth yvas different in both these cases, because, while Ishmael was bom like any other man, Isaac inherited also the promises made by God to Abraham. The former then is pure man and a slave at that; while the other is the father of the Christian family in yvhom the promises made to Abraham find their full completion.

2. *All that is an allegory:*

St Paul begins to look for the metaphorical sense of this fact. The two women represented the two covenants, that promulgated on Mt Sinai and the new covenant of Christianity. Agar, the slave who gives birth to slaves, is a type or figure of the Old Law, in which those who follow it live as slaves.

3. *Mount Sinai, in Arabia:*

Logically he should have followed up the former verse with a description of the law of freedom, but instead we have one of those changes in ideas so common in St Paul; he goes on to describe why it is that he sees in Agar a representation of the old law of Mt Sinai. The exegetical difficulties of this passage may be set aside (the Knox translation removes them with a stroke of the pen, in imitation of the Nacar—Colunga version), and we pass on to the inner meaning of the verses; i.e. that the line of Agar and Sinai continues in the Jerusalem known to St Paul. His thought can be represented thus:

I	II
Agar, the slave	Sara, the freewoman
the son born naturally	the son born to the promises
the Mosaic covenant	the covenant of the faith
Jerusalem, the city in Palestine and Judaism	the heavenly Jerusalem and Christianity
slavery under the law	freedom from the law

4. *Our mother is the heavenly Jerusalem:*

The Jerusalem of today, a Jewish city and a slave, has its parallel in the heavenly Jerusalem, true home of the Christian, of which the Messianic kingdom on earth in which we live is but the beginning. This new Jerusalem is the mother of free men.

5. So *it is that we read:*

St Paul, in his efforts to prove that the heavenly Jerusalem is our mother, applies to her a passage of Isaias (51. 4) chosen most probably because he remembered the sterility of Sara. The Church, like Sara, has a more numerous offspring than the law.

6. *It is we, brethren, that are children of the promise:*

These verses form the conclusion to be drawn from the allegory. Just as Ishmael persecuted Isaac, so the Jews persecute the Christians. (The supposed persecution of Isaac by Ishmael is not to be found in the Greek or the Hebrew text of Genesis, and is taken from some rabbinical tradition.) But, just as Ishmael and his mother were banished because of this persecution, so you should banish all the doctors of the law and their mosaic practices from your midst, because the son of the free woman has nothing to do with the son of the bond woman. You are free; do not seek chains once more.

7. *The slavery of the law:*

At first sight it would appear that St Paul despises the Jewish law; yet surely it was a good thing and God-given? Did it not represent a great advantage for the Jews? Yes; and this St Paul himself says ven' clearly on other occasions; e.g. Rom. 7. 12-14, 2. 13; Gal. 3. 19; Rom. 9. 4, etc. To understand this passage we must remember that here St Paul is not drawing a comparison between Judaism and the state of the Gentiles, as he does in Romans, but between the Judaism of his day and Christianity. Judaism posterior to Christ is related to Christianity' as slavery to freedom.

The promises were not made to Judaism but to Christianity'. The law came after the promises, and although it did good to the Jews, enclosing them in an iron system which held them until they should reach perfect liberty' in the new law of love, still, of itself it did not sanctify them. It was nothing more than a preparation for the new law, and a rudimentary' one at that. If this could be said of the state of the law under Moses, what could be said about the law at the time of Christ and St Paul?

8. *Applications:*

There do not seem, at first sight, to be many applications nowadays of this doctrine, yet we find that St Paul himself gives us a very useful one at the beginning of Chapter 5 of this Epistle; when he says, Stand fast, and do not let yourselves be caught again in the yoke of slavery. . . . Yes, brethren, freedom claimed you when you were called. Only do not let this freedom give a foothold to corrupt nature; you must be servants still, serving one another in a spirit of charity *(ibid.* 5. 1, 13-14).

True Christian liberty' consists in freedom from the chains of sin.

B: The Gospel: John 6. 1-15

History and Argument

1. *Time and occasion:*

It was during the second year of the public life, at the beginning of spring. The feast of the Jewish Pasch was near at hand (John 6. 4). The fields were green with the usual spring grass which would wither in the summer heat (Mark 6. 39; John 6. 10). The first mission of the apostles and disciples throughout Galilee had been a great success, the crowds were flocking to see and hear Jesus, while the news of what he was doing had probably roused Herod to fix his attention on him and wonder if he were not the Baptist risen from the dead.

2. *The place:*

When the apostles arrived Jesus, to get away from the crowds a little and to give some physical and spiritual rest to his followers,

took ship to cross the hike and reach the quieter eastern side, where he would be further from Herod's rule.

Our Lord was on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Lake of Genesareth, near the city of Tiberius, built by Herod and named after the Emperor. He crossed over to a deserted part of the opposite shore near the city of Bcthsaida-Julias, rebuilt by the Tetrarch, Philip. He was now outside Herod's jurisdiction and in that of Philip. Here, in the peace of this quiet spot, our Lord intended to rest. But his plans were to be frustrated by the people, who went on foot round the shore of the lake, having fixed their eyes on the little boat to see in which direction it was sailing. When the ship arrived at the coast they found the crowds waiting there for them. Jesus descended from the boat and after healing the sick, ascended the little hill and began to preach to the crowd.

When the day began to decline he prepared the way for the miracle by asking a question which proves that there was nothing at all to eat in the whole area, at least, not enough to feed the five thousand present. At length he gave an order and they began to take their places in companies of fifty and a hundred on the green slopes.

3. *The miracle:*

The Lord had before him five loaves and two fishes. The twelve were grouped around him, curious as to what he would do. Over their shoulders they wore the baskets which the Jew always carried when he was travelling, and which held, apart from food necessary for the journey, a small quantity of straw to make a pillow at night. Jesus blessed the bread and the fish, then broke them into pieces and gave them to the disciples, probably just dropping the pieces into the baskets they carried. The apostles began to distribute the food among those who were seated on the grass—it was easy to count them because of the way they were grouped. The more they distributed the more there was, so much so that their baskets remained full till the end. The common people saw what had happened and their enthusiasm knew no bounds; there was talk about making our Lord king, of the great prophet and so on. Jesus, to escape from them, retired into the mountain and hid himself.

4. *Reflections:*

Such a simple story needs little or no explanation; we may limit ourselves to two apologetic reflections.

The four Evangelists give the story and it figures in all the codices, so that there is no question of an interpolation. In St John it is joined to the promise of the Eucharist, because the intention of Christ to prepare the way for this promise by means of a miracle in which bread was multiplied is crystal clear. In the other Gospels there are several allusions to this miracle, so much so that, if we

wish to cut it out of the Scriptures we would have to suppress a good deal of the Gospels with it.

Those who deny the truth of this fact as narrated by St John do so merely because they do not believe in the possibility of miracles; there is no other reason for doubt. We do admit the fact and also what follows, when Christ walks on the waters of the lake, demonstrating his power over inanimate nature; we also admire the Teacher in Jesus, preparing the way for the doctrine which he was to teach publicly a few days later concerning the miraculous multiplication which takes place in the Eucharist.

The Texts

1. *After this,fesus retired across the sea of Galilee . . .*

There were two motives, to escape from Herod for a time and to give rest to his followers. Two lessons follow for us; that of prudence in not defying danger unnecessarily, and that of seeking some time of silence and retreat after active apostolic labours.

2. *And there was a great multitude following him . . .*

attracted by what their senses had seen and heard, but at the same time willing to follow one who loves them and will do good to them.

3. *He took pity on them, since they were like sheep that have no shepherd . . .*

This people found itself without shepherds who could guide them. The Scribes and Pharisees were certainly useless for this task. The people, docile and well directed, forms the 'civitas' or society; without such direction it is a mass, without personality, at one moment ready to crown Christ king and at the other to cry 'Crucify him'. That is the difference between the kingdom of God, in which through individual sanctity the Mystical Body is constructed into a unity, and the Jewish mob, acting from collective impulse but with no direction but caprice.

The people form the matter of society, the authority is that which gives it form. If the leaders of the people give them life, making them conscious of their rights and obligations in the common good, then the 'masses' become something living and social.

We must think, too, of the merciful compassion of Christ; the more we become like him the greater will our compassion be.

4. *Whence are we to buy bread . . .*

After he had taught and cured the sick for the greater part of the day the disciples approached our Lord to warn him that it was time to send the people home so that they might eat. 'There is no need for them to go away', was the Master's reply; 'you give them to eat.' Then he called Philip, the most docile and gentle of the Apostolic College, and, knowing that he came from that part of

Palestine, asked him where they could buy bread. Two hundred silver pieces would not buy enough bread for them even to give each one a little, was thc answer. Thc Gospel data are perfect; this sum would have been necessary to buy sufficient bread for five thousand, and even then thc ration per person would be very small. It is easy to see that our Lord's questions were destined to try the faith and confidence of his followers.

5. *Five barley loaves and two fishes . . .*

Meanwhile Andrew had been doing something practical; he had made enquiries among thc crowd to see if he could find any food, but he came across only one person who had anything, a youth, probably selling his wares, who had five barley loaves (animal fodder, as Pliny calls it) and two little dried or smoked fish, as the Greek word implies. It is a small detail, but it shows us what our Lord's normal meals must have been like. He was the Lord of all, who could make manna come down from heaven, yet he was content with so little! All the precautions had now been taken to make the miracle obvious; if after this people would not believe. . . .

Jesus now began to act and show gifts as an organizer, because he told them to make the men sit down in companies of fifty and a hundred, thus making the distribution easier and assuring that each of the Apostles would be able to take charge of several groups without danger of them being served twice. All took their places on the grass—another faithfully recorded detail of the Gospels—the women and children probably apart from the men, as was the Jewish custom.

6. *AndJesus took the loaves . . .*

He took the bread in his hands, lifting his eyes to heaven (Mark 6. 41; Luke 9. 16) gave thanks to his Father as the Jews usually did before eating, gave the bread to the disciples and they gave it to the multitude. Let us take note of the following:

(a) the laconic style of the narrative, so different from that used in legends;

(b) the parallel with the institution of the Eucharist;

(c) Jesus put the bread into the hands of the disciples and they gave it to the people. That is the course of things; God gives to you, then you should give to those in need. Eat yourself and then give away what remains; and if you really want to be an apostle, give away first and then eat;

(d) Give thanks to God first for his favours and thus you will dispose your heart to ask for new ones.

7. *As much as they had a mindfor . . .*

The bread and fish had been multiplied; leaving aside extra-ordinary miracles, let us think about the ordinary ones which are worked among us.

(a) The table which divine providence spreads for us every day:

Because it has been prepared by him as an ordinary, every-day affair, it does not therefore become less wonderful or beautiful. St Augustine reminds us of this on many occasions, pointing to the growth and production of the fruits of the earth; then he says: Because you see it daily you appreciate it less (PL. 37. 1164).

(b) The bread of the word of God:

Which grows and produces fruit, provided a man of good will sows the seed first.

(c) The bread of the Eucharist:

The body eats the flesh and blood of Christ so that the soul may be fed, says Tertullian,

(d) We see in this passage:

Divine providence, divine goodness, the power of the God-man, Jesus Christ, an eye ever on the watch and a heart which is full of compassion, together with an open hand.

8. *Gather up the broken pieces that are left over . . .*

God does not want to see his gifts wasted, especially after such a tremendous miracle.

Christ teaches us that corporal or spiritual goods which are given as alms do not diminish, but rather they are multiplied by a hundred or a thousand. The more we give to the poor so much the more shall we receive from God, who will never allow himself to be outdone in generosity. St Augustine says: He who gives to the poor lends to God and God will repay him. Do you want to give little and receive much? Then do not turn to man, who only gives unwillingly and grudgingly. Go to Christ, who takes pleasure only in doing. . . . For a few silver coins he will return you immense riches; for earth he will give you heaven; for something which passes in the twinkling of an eye, something which is eternal; for a small alms given from those goods which you have received he will give you himself (*Ennar. in Ps.* 103, PL. 37. 1387).

9. *When they saw the miracle which Jesus had done . . .*

The crowd is sincere, but how fickle! Today asking if this be not the great Prophet who is to come; tomorrow, led away by a few scribes and Pharisees, they will turn against Christ merely because he teaches them truths difficult to believe. Do we only give God thanks for his visible blessings? How much he gives us every day, both in the order of grace and in that of nature, and we do not even take notice of it,

SECTION HI. THE FATHERS

I. ST JOHN €HRYSOSTOM

i. *Despise worldly glory:*

(a) They were going to choose him for their king; but Christ flees. Why did he do this ? To teach us to despise the things of this world, especially its honours, and to let us sec that he needs nothing from this world. Because he who chose everything of the most humble: his mother, home, city, education, dress, would not later wish to be glorified on earth. Everything that shone in him was heavenly, the angels and the star; the Father acclaiming him, the prophets announcing his coming, but the earthly part was all humble so that his power might be more clearly seen. It was because he came to teach us to despise earthly things and not to admire or run after the glitter of this life, but rather to laugh at it and aspire to heavenly things. He who admires the things of this world will not admire those of heaven. . . .

If you must love glory, then let it be immortal glory, because its contemplation is more glorious and a greater gain. Those here order you to seek favour from them at your own cost; Christ, on the contrary, gives you a hundred times more than you give him and to all that he adds eternal life. Which is better, then; to be admired on earth or in heaven; by men or by God; to be crowned for a day or for ever ?

(b) Not to co-operate in the sinful vainglory of the neighbour:

Let us not provoke God to anger by hoarding when we should not and by wasting our substance where we ought not. What anger does he not merit who gives to a whore and denies the pleas of the poor ? Even granting that you give of what you have earned by your own work, is it not culpable to give in support of evil, and honour that which should be punished ? If by depriving the widows and orphans you foment vice, consider that fire which is prepared for those who commit such crimes!

2. *The bread of life:*

When he gave them bread and satisfied their hunger they called him a prophet and tried to make him their king; but when he instructed them concerning the spiritual food, about eternal life; when he spoke to them of the resurrection and lifted up their hopes, when more than ever they should have admired him, then they murmured against him and left him.

* Hom. 42-46 in Joan.

He calls himself the bread of life because he sustains our life in the present and also in the future; for which cause he adds: He that eateth this bread shall live for ever. Here he calls bread either the salutary doctrines and faith in him or else his own body. For both these fortify the soul,

3. *Incorporation with Christ:*

(a) The eucharistie union:

It is said by the Apostle that we are members of his body (Eph. 5. 30). That we may be his members not only through love but also in reality let us mingle ourselves with that flesh; because this is possible through the medium of that banquet which he gave us, when he wished to demonstrate the tremendous love he has for us. For this reason he mingled with men, using his own body as leaven, that we might form one whole, the body united to the head. ... Not only did he permit those who love him to see him, but also to touch him and eat him, embracing him, satisfying all the desires of love. Let us rise from that table then like lions breathing fire, terrible against Satan, with our thoughts fixed on our Leader and on the love which he has shown us.

(b) The blood of Christ, life of men:

This blood produces in us the image of our King, cause of inconceivable beauty, and does not allow the nobility of the soul to wither, since it waters it and sustains it constantly. . . . This blood, worthily received, puts to flight the demons, attracting to us the angels and the Lord himself, since, where they see his blood, the devils flee and the angels approach. This blood, once shed, saved the whole world. ... It is the health of our consciences, by it the soul is cleansed, made beautiful, catches fire; it makes the soul more brilliant than any fire; scarcely shed, it made heaven accessible to us.

(c) The blood of Christ, price of the world:

This blood was constandy pre-figured of old in the sacrifices and in the death of the just. It is the price of the world; with it Christ purchased his Church, with it he beautifies her. Like a man who wishes to buy slaves and who pays for them with gold, and if he wishes to adorn them he does so with the same precious metal; so Christ bought us with his blood and adorns us with it. Those who partake of this blood assist at the very throne of God together with the angels and archangels and the powers above, dressed in the royal stole of Christ and invested with spiritual arms. Nothing has been said yet, because such are vested with the King himself.

4. *Receive communion worthily:*

Just as it is a great thing and a worthy thing that you do, while you approach with a clean conscience you do so for your health·

so if you approach with a bad conscience you merit chastisement and vengeance. For: He is eating and drinking damnation to himself if he eats and drinks unworthily, not recognizing the Lord's body for what it is (1 Cor. 11. 29). If those who stain the imperial purple are chastised, as arc those who tear it, why should we be astonished if those who receive the body of Christ with unclean consciences receive the same punishment as those who tore his flesh with the nails? Consider then the terrible punishment at which St Paul hints when he says: Let a man be convicted by two or three witnesses of defying the Law of Moses, and he dies, without hope of mercy. What of the man who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has reckoned the blood of the covenant, that blood which sanctified him, as a thing unclean, mocked at the Spirit that brought him grace? (Heb. 10. 28-29).

IL ST GREGORY NAZIANZEN

Compassion for the unfortunate

i. *Mercy in the face of temporal misfortune:*

(a) First and most important precept:

According to the testimony of St Paul and of Christ himself, charity should be regarded as the first and most important precept of the law and the prophets, and I think that the most excellent part of this virtue consists in our love for and benevolence towards the poor, that we should have pity on those who are united to us in the bond of a common nature, and that we should be merciful to them in their necessities. . . .

The law tells us that we should rejoice with them that rejoice and weep with them that weep. We must have compassion and mercy on the poor and with all those who are under the burden of some calamity, because they are men like ourselves. . . . All are equally worthy of compassion and await help at our hands as we expect it ourselves from the hand of God.

(b) The mystery of our bodies:

... a body which, when it is well and in good health makes war on me and, falling sick, torments me and fills me with sadness; a body which I love as a fellow slave, have it for a friend and detest it at the same time as a most cruel enemy; from which I flee as from a chain that binds me and respect as co-heir of the same inheritance .. . if, on the contrary, I employ kindness and indulgence with this companion and instrument, it is then impossible for me to resist the impulses of its rebellion, putting myself in evident danger of separating myself from God and seeing myself flung down to earth

* Sermon on *Love of the Poor.*

because of the obstacles and traps it sets for me. It is a flattering enemy and an annoying friend. O Immortal God! What union is this? What is the reason for so many enmities and discords? I embrace that which I fear; that which I love produces horror in me... . Perhaps so that we may understand that we are, at one and the same time, great and lowly, earthly and heavenly, temporal and immortal, heirs to the light and tire or to the darkness, according as we incline to one or other of the two extremes.

(c) Compassion for the bodily ills of the neighbour:

We are all one in the Lord, whether rich or poor, slaves or freemen, healthy or sick, and there is only one head of all, Christ, from whom come all things; and the members among themselves, one is of the other and all are for all. Therefore those should not be abandoned or despised who succumb to a common weakness, nor should the satisfaction at seeing them well be greater than the compassion which is produced in us on seeing our brothers overcome by some illness. On the contrarv, we should remember that the health of our dies and souls depends on the merits we gain through our charity towards them.

2. *Our lives and those of the poor:*

What! Shall they suffer in the open air while we dwell in sumptuous houses. . . . Shall they always be shivering with cold without anything but rags to coverthem, while we go around in soft and ample garments, in fine linen and silk; and all the time we keep them in cupboards, although it is really useless, because they will still be eaten by moths and destroyed with time.

What does this mean, my brethren, except that we are more sick than they in soul, because they suffer against their will, but wre suffer willingly. Bodily ills come to an end with this life; those of the soul follow us whithersoever we may go.... We must do one of two things; either lay at the feet of Christ all that we have, in order to follow him truly and with sincerity, taking up his cross and unburdening ourselves of every' obstacle in order to unite ourselves with him in the supernatural life, reaching Christ through our humility and enriching ourselves through having made ourselves poor. Or, at least, share our riches, legitimately come by, with the poor, that thus they may be sanctified in some way.

3. *How to make our riches stable:*

Do we never think of repenting at times ?... By nature there is nothing human which is lasting, always remaining in the same state; all that we have is like a wheel, which changes with time or even perhaps in a day or an hour; so that the confidence we may have in temporal things is less than that which we have in the four winds, whose direction is unknown from one moment to another; or in the

track of a ship at sea; or in the dreams we have at night, which give us a brief pleasure. . . .

How wiser they are who, never having put their confidence in the present, accumulate true riches for the future and, thinking on the uncertainty and inconsistency of human prosperity, give themselves to doing good to others, which will never perish, in order to show once more the humanity and generosity with which they have treated the poor.

To my way of thinking this is the real reason why none of the good things of this world are stable and lasting for us mortals. This has been the wise disposition of providence, that we should be the playthings of things which change continually, escaping from our hands before we really possess them, so that, thinking of their very uncertainty, we may make an effort to reach the gate of eternal life. . . . Blessed is he who, distinguishing and separating these things with the sword of the Word of God which divides virtue and vice, prepares the way in his heart, as the Psalmist says, and, being nailed with Christ to the cross in the present life, passes in his company into the life eternal, goes up to heaven to inherit a lasting, unchanging life. . . .

4. *Sinful origin of the inequality of riches:*

Speaking of those who hoard their riches and refuse help to those in need, St Gregory gives as the reason for this conduct the fact that they forget that: 'poverty and riches, freedom and slavery and other things like these came into the world and attacked the human race through sin, from which they come. . .

In the beginning it was not so, but he who created man left him on the earth free and adorned with liberty, giving him just one command. Man was rich in the midst of paradise and God wished that the same fate should be that of all who were born of that first man. . . . But once hatreds, discords, deceptions entered into the world, brought about by the cunning of the enemy, the serpent, who manages to attract man by his flattery, urging on the stronger ones that they should set themselves against the weak; from that moment, I say, the human race, once united, became divided in various classes, and avarice broke the nobility of the natural order. . . .

But you, consider the first equality, not the subsequent division; place before your minds the law of the creator, not that of the devil...

There is nothing so divine in man as to deserve well of others.... When you hear it said, 'the poor and the rich have met; but God created both', do not imagine that he created this one poor and this one rich and from that draw an argument for not helping the poor; but that Solomon says that both one and the other is equally the work of God, even though, so far as externals are concerned, they differ in their condition of life.

5. *Scripture and almsdeeds:*

Perhaps you imagine that you are free to practise beneficence and that you are not obliged to give and that the words of the Gospel have not the force of a law but merely of a counsel? That also I would indeed desire to be true, esteeming it highly; but I am terrified by that left hand, those goats and the dreadful words addressed to the wicked by him who places them there, not because they have laid hands on another's goods, or robbed the temples or committed adultery or any other forbidden crime, but because they did not care for Christ in the person of the poor. . . . Let us visit Christ when the occasion presents itself, let us feed him, clothe him, give Christ lodging, honour him, not only at table as did Simon, nor with anointings like Marv, nor with things fitted for his burial as he did who was only half in love with Christ, Nicodemus, nor lastly by means of gold, incense and myrrh as did the Magi. The Lord of all things wants mercy rather than sacrifice, and since compassion is worth more in his sight than the fat of many oxen let us practise towards, the poor, while we are on earth so that, when we leave this world, they may receive us into everlasting dwellings, in the Lord himself, Christ, to whom be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

III. ST AUGUSTINE

St Augustine comments on this Gospel in several places, but particularly in his Commentaries on St John's Gospel, in a brief sermon and also in *De Diversis Quaestionibus.* His explanations are too allegorical to be of ven' much use to us here, so we shall limit ourselves to a brief summan· of his teaching on mercy.

A: Justice and mercy in God

I. *Pardon now, justice later:*

Our perverse minds would wish God to be so merciful that he would never be just; others, over-confident in their own sanctity, would like to see God so just that he would never need to be merciful. God is both one and the other, fulfilling both offices. His mercy does not impede his justice, nor does his justice suppress his mercy. Merciful and just. How is he merciful? Pardoning sinners now and granting his forgiveness to those who confess to him. Just. How? Because the day of justice will come, a day which he goes on putting off but does not forget, and when that day comes he will reward according to merits. Or perhaps you want him to give the same to his friends as to his enemies? Do you think it just that he should place Judas where he has put Peter? Nevertheless he would have put him there if he had corrected himself, but he despaired and preferred to hang himself rather than ask pardon *(Sermo* 22).

•PL. 40.138; 41, 415 ff-

2. *The two stages:*

Let no one think himself immune, resting on the divine mercy, because the judgement exists; and let none of those who seek to do good fear the judgement of God, because his mercy goes before it. Men when they judge, allow themselves to be led away at times by mercy and act contrary to justice; the former virtue shines forth in them while the latter is missing. On other occasions they want to act justly and forget mercy. God, on the contrary, does not abandon the severity of his justice in the goodness of his mercy, nor when he judges severely does he lose the beneficence of mercy. Let us distinguish the times and we shall find that the present time is for mercy and that the future time is dedicated to justice.. . .

If God did not first of all pardon by his mercy he would not find later anyone whom he could justly crown. This is the era of divine mercy, in which the patience of God leads to penance all those who sin *(Ennar. in* Ps. too. 1; PL. 37, 1289).

3. *The grandeur of God's mercy:*

Who so patient, who so abundant in mercy? We sin and yet we live; sins grow and our life is prolonged; there are blasphemies every day, yet the sun still shines on the good and the evil. On all sides he calls us to repentance, shouting to us through the benefits of his creatures, giving us time to live, calling us through the preachers, through our intimate thoughts, through his chastisements, through the mercy of his comfort *(Ennar. in.* Ps. 102, 16; PL. 37, 1330).

4. *The way of the just:*

This is the road followed by the just and the saints, who had God for their Father and the Church for their Mother and were faithful to both; rather, they went on steadily towards the eternal reward in the love of both parents. . . . Because two parents gave us birth to death; and two brought us forth to life; Adam and Eve to death; Christ and his Church to life *(Serm.* 22. 9-10; PL. 38, 159).

B: The mercy of men

i. *Forgive and you shall be forgiven:*

In the midst of the struggle which, like every fight, is dangerous, I shall rest on those words which follow: 'my mercy', and I shall be safe. Why shall I not be overcome because of my mercy? Is it because you give me your mercy and are merciful in me, or is it because you have given me that by which I may be merciful? Certainly, there is no better way of overcoming the enemy than by mercy. . . .

Do you wish, he says to me, for pardon? Then do you forgive. But there are also other works of mercy; do you want me to give to you? Then do you give, because in the same place in the Gospel it is said, Forgive and you shall be forgiven; give and it shall be

given unto you (Luke 6. 37-38). I have something against you. And have you anything against your neighbour? Forgive and I shall forgive, λ ou ask me tor something and others make requests to you. Give and I shall give (PL. 37. i860).

2. *Motives for mercy:*

Mine is what I possess by right; and things are possessed by right which are justly possessed ; and those things are justly possessed which are well possessed. Therefore everything which is badly possessed is someone else's, and a thing is badly possessed if it is used badly. . . . No one possesses justice badly and without loving it. Money, on the other hand, is possessed badly by the wicked and by the just with ever greater perfection according as they love it less.

3. *For evil times, greater mercy:*

I have heard that you have forgotten the custom of giving clothes to the poor, a work of mercy which I always recommended to you when I was with you and which I still recommend now, lest these present evils which attack the world may make you lazy. . . . Not only should you not slacken your efforts in these works of mercy, but you should increase those you are accustomed to perform. Just as those who see their houses falling and the walls splitting open on all sides, seek shelter by running to a safer place, so the Christian hearts, seeing that this world is tottering and that troubles are increased on all sides, should seek to turn their worldly goods, which they could hide in the earth, into heavenly riches. . . . Therefore, my dearest brothers, that which you were accustomed to do, continue to do it with even greater enthusiasm, each one according to the measure of his power.

IV. ST BERNARD

Union with God by charity

By means of charity' man is in God and God is in man, as St John says: God is love, he who dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him (1 John 4. 16). But this permanent union is the fruit of the joining together of two beings who come to form one sole spirit in virtue of the moral, not essential, transformation of one into the other, of man into God. Do you see now the difference which exists between the union of Father and Son and that which is brought about in the just soul by grace ? In the first case there is a substantial union, in the second a moral and accidental one. . . . Since man and God have not the same substance or nature, it

♦ From Sermon 71, On *the 'Song of Songs'* and *Of the Most Holy Body of Christ.*

cannot be said that they are one and the same thing. Yet we may say with all truth that they form one and the same spirit, if they are thoroughly united in the bond of charity. This is a union which is not brought about by the joining of their natures but by the union of their wills.

SECTION IV. THEOLOGIANS

I. ST THOMAS AQUINAS

The Eucharist: Bread of Life

1. *I am the living bread:*

The flesh of the Lord is living bread because it is the flesh of the Word of God. He does not possess life eternal who does not eat this flesh and drink this blood, because without it man can have mortal life, but not that which is eternal. This food is not taken to sustain mortal life. He who takes this bread, drinking of the flesh and blood of the Lord, has life, and that eternal.

To eat that flesh and drink that blood is to remain in Christ and to possess Christ in oneself. Therefore, he who does not remain in Christ and in whom Christ does not dwell neither eats his flesh nor drinks his blood; rather he eats and drinks such a great sacramental sign for his own judgement and condemnation *(Catena Aurea,* tome 2, pp. 466 ff.).

2. *The theology of the Eucharist as food:*

(a) The mystery of faith:

Neither the senses nor the understanding can detect the presence of the true body and blood of Christ in this sacrament, but only faith, which rests on divine authority. And this is convenient:

i. *For the perfection of the New Law:* because the sacrifices of the Old Law contained in figure only that true sacrifice of the Passion and death of Christ. .. therefore it is convenient that the sacrifice of the New Law instituted by Christ should have something more, namely, that it should actually contain Christ himself, who suffered for us, and that not only in significance or figure, but in reality.

ii. *This is fitting because of the charity of Christ:* by which he took a true body of the same nature as ours for our salvation. And since it is proper to friendship to live with one's friends, he did not deprive us of his presence during this earthly pilgrimage, but instead he united us to him in this sacrament by his true body and blood. Therefore he says: he that eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him, wherefore this sacrament is a sign of charity and excites our hope, through such a familiar union with Christ.

iii. *It is fitting because of the perfection of the faith:* which, just as it is concerned with the divinity of Christ, is also concerned with his humanity, according to that saying: You believe in God, believe also in me (John 14. 1). And since faith is of things which are invisible, so, as Christ shows us invisibly his divinity, in this sacrament he shows us his flesh in an invisible manner (cf. 3· q· 75· a. i. c).

(b) The whole Christ in the Eucharist:

It is absolutely necessary to believe according to the Catholic faith that the whole Christ is in this sacrament. However, it should also be known that this totality of Christ is in the sacrament through two things: (1) by the sacrament itself; (2) by natural concomitance.

i. By the sacrament itself, that is, under the species which is directly the object of the change from the existing substance of bread and wine.

ii. By natural concomitance that also is under the species which is really united with that element which is the term of the former conversion. Because if two things are really united, then wherever one really exists it is necessary that the other should also exist.

(c) Ways of eating Christ in the Eucharist:

In the reception of this sacrament we must consider two things, the sacrament itself and its effect. The perfect manner of receiving it is to receive both the sacrament and its effect. . . . However, it does happen, as has already been said, that someone finds himself impeded from receiving the effect of this sacrament, and this reception is imperfect. . . .

Just as the perfect is opposed to the imperfect, so the reception of the sacrament in which only the sacrament is received without its effect, is opposed to that spiritual reception by which one receives the effect alone; for which effect a man unites himself spiritually to Christ by faith and charity (33. q. 80. a. 1).

(d) The necessity of communion:

The effect of a sacrament can be obtained before its actual reception by means of the desire to receive it. Therefore, before receiving this sacrament a man can obtain salvation through the desire to receive it, as in the case of baptism. However, there is a difference between these two sacraments, because baptism is the beginning of the spiritual life and the door to the other sacraments; while the Eucharist is as it were the consummation of that life. Thus baptism is necessary in order to begin the spiritual life, and the Eucharist is necessary' for the perfection of the same, but not to have it simply, for that it is enough to have the desire for this sacrament—and that is why the Eucharist is not necessary in the same way as baptism.

(c) Daily communion:

i. *It is useful.* It is useful to receive it daily so that man may obtain every day the fruit of the sacrament. Because of this St Ambrose says: If every time the blood of Christ is shed it is shed for the remission of sins, I should receive it always, for I always sin and must have it always as a remedy (3. q. 80. a. 10. c).

ii. *It is laudable.* Since man needs every day the salutary strength of Christ, he can laudably receive every day this sacrament. It is a spiritual food, and therefore, just as bodily food is taken every day, so it is praiseworthy to receive this sacrament every day. ... St Augustine says: If you receive the sacrament daily then daily does Christ rise again, since it is today when Christ rises for you.

3. *Provided there exist the necessary dispositions of soul:*

It is necessary that he who receives this sacrament should approach it with great devotion and reverence. Therefore, if anyone finds himself so disposed every day, then it is praiseworthy to receive it every day. For that reason St Augustine says: Live in such a way that you may be worthy to receive him daily. Nevertheless, since in most men there are many obstacles to this devotion, because of the lack of dispositions either of body or of soul, it is not useful for all to approach daily this sacrament, but only when they are properly disposed.

(a) The effects of the Eucharist:

St Thomas lists these as follows:

i. *It gives grace:* because it is a sacrament which contains the very author of grace (3 q. 79. a. i.c).

ii. *It gives charity.* Just as baptism is known as the sacrament of faith, so the Eucharist may fittingly be called the sacrament of charity, which is the bond of perfection: St Augustine says: O Sacrament of piety! Sign of unity! O bond of charity!

iii. *Diminishes concupiscence.* Not directly, but as a consequence of the increase in charity. It confirms man's heart in good, and therefore preserves him from sin.

iv. *Increases devotion.* The soul is strengthened spiritually by this sacrament and excited to action; this naturally increases devotion.

v. *Pardons venial sins.* Just as our normal human food repairs the loss of energy which occurs every day, so this spiritual food heals those daily wounds of venial sin which diminish the strength of our charity. As St Ambrose says: This daily bread is taken to repair the daily weakness. In exciting and increasing our charity it also forgives our venial sins.

II. ST BONAVENTURE

1. *Bread, a figure of the Eucharist:*

Christ represents his holy body under the figure of bread, of which he says: I myself am the living bread which has come down from heaven; and again, What is this bread which I am to give? It is my flesh, given for the life of the world. This is that bread which the angel brought to Elias, as we read in the third book of Kings: Then he found near his head a girdle-cake and a pitcher of water. The girdle-cake is the body of Christ, which is called a girdle-cake because it is veiled by the accidents, which are symbolized by the ashes; and under these ashes of the accidents is hidden the food of our souls.... Just as this bread was brought by an angel, so we may understand that, when this sacrament is made, there is a great host of the angels present. St Gregor.' says, concerning this, 'which of the faithful can doubt that, in the very moment of sacrifice, the heavens are opened at the voice of the priest, the lowest things are mingled with the highest, those of earth with those of heaven ?' But before celebrating these mysteries it is first of all necessary for us to sacrifice ourselves to God on the altar, in his presence, by true contrition of heart.

2. *Conditions for receiving it:*

(a) We must fly from human consolations:

Since in the sacrament of the Eucharist is to be found the fullness of spiritual consolation, which is not given to those who seek other kinds, as St Bernard says; it is necessary that he who wishes to attain to spiritual consolation should reject that which is carnal.

(b) Honesty of life:

There is nothing in the world so harmful or so dangerous as these three concupiscences, that of the flesh, that of the eyes and the pride of life, by which St Bonaventure understands the appeal of the flesh, the appeal of riches and honours.

(c) Obedience to our superiors:

When all are united under humble obedience, there is born in all the flame of love and mutual understanding, all the virtues necessary to approach the sacrament of the altar.

(d) Devotion:

This is attained through sanctifying grace when we allow it to act in us.

3. *Effects of the Eucharist:*

We are told in the same place (3 Kings 19. 3-9) that Elias, strengthened by that food, went on for forty days and forty nights

till he reached God's own mountain, Horeb, and that he saw divine secrets. All this describes the four effects (of the Eucharist).

(a) It strengthens us for action:

This is implied by what is said, that he walked forty days in the strength of that food. And the food is Christ, by whose strength man labours, so long as he does not give up his progress in the spiritual life.

(b) It lifts us up to contemplation:

For that reason we are told that Elias reached God's own mountain Horeb; and what can we understand by this mountain if it is not the lifting up of the mind to God? And there God appeared to him, signifying that at this moment, the soul is given the gift of contemplation. What is more, God appeared in flames of fire, whose property it is to illuminate and to warm. When the soul reaches the state of contemplation not only is the mind illuminated with the light of knowledge, but also the will is enflamed with the fire of love.

(c) It disposes us for the revelation of divine things:

The third effect is to dispose us for the revelation of divine secrets, for which reason it is written here that the Lord said to Elias. . . . Thus, it was revealed to Elias that the Lord is not to be found in the wind of pride, nor the earthquake of impatience, nor in the fire of avarice, or of carnal concupiscence, but in the gentle breeze, that is to say, in a quiet conscience.

(d) Despise the world and desire eternal goods:

Certainly, when the soul is lifted up to the contemplation of the immensity of the divine beauty and power, it afterwards shrinks into its own self in humility and littleness; covers its face with humility, leaves the worldly avarice behind it, and desires the eternal. . . . Let us praise the Lord, then, for having given us this representation of his body under the figure of bread (Cf. *De Sanctissimo Corpore Christi,* yff).

SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. ST THOMAS OF VILLANOVA

(Extracts taken from his sermon for the fourth Sunday of Lent.)

i. *God's mercy:*

(a) God's ways:

I shall treat of the mercy of God to move sinners to repentance, awaking in them the hope of God's pardon.

The Church, on this Sunday, gives us an important lesson w'hen she breaks the penitential mourning of Lent, changes the colour of

her vestments and utters words of joy, as those mothers do who fear that their children will faint if the mourning is prolonged too much.

The sinner also, in the midst of his tears and meditation on the motives of fear and sorrow, should pause from time to time, and lift up his heart by considering the mercy of God.

In the Gospel of today we are told of that look of pity which our Lord directed to the crowd. God has many ways of looking; to convert us, to punish us, to reward us; but all his glances pursue a merciful purpose.

All speaks to the sinner of God's mercy. The inn calls to him who, wounded by robbers, desires to be healed; the crib, the cross, the nails, the whole life of Jesus proclaim his mercy. 'Think well on these words', says St Augustine: T am poor who have made all things, and poor for your sake.'

(b) Two manifestations of God's mercy:

St Bernard, explaining the divine mercy, says that it is manifested in two principal ways, namely by preserving us from sin and by converting the fallen sinner.

In order to preserve us from sin he cures our evil inclinations, gives us his grace to overcome them and removes the occasions of sin. At times he uses only one of these methods; at others two or three of them at once. One will live quietly without sin and in God's grace, because he has given him a meek nature in which the passions have hardly any strength. Others have not received such a nature, but on the other hand, they have the help of God's grace.

The former have received the greater favour; but the latter acquire greater merits; the former live a more tranquil life, but the latter gain a greater and more brilliant victory.

2. *A song to God's mercy:*

Here is a song to put the Lord's mercies on record for ever (Ps. 88. i). I shall sing them in this world and I shall sing them in eternity, when 1 have experienced them fully. Today I sing and fear, then my heart will sing and will never be silent, without the fear of any sadness. I shall not speak in my songs of my own holiness, or of my merits, which I shall have forgotten, but only of the mercy you showed me from the beginning. Among so many creatures whom you did not wish to create out of their nothingness, you chose me to give me being. You illuminated my soul with the light of faith, washed it with the waters of baptism and then taught me the secrets of your law and your mysteries. You placed me, O Lord, among your sons, and later among your priests, and what is more, among those who hope that they will sing your glories in heaven. I was living covered with sins and abominable to your eyes, yet you dealt with me as though you did not notice it. Why? I cannot find

any other motive except your infinite goodness which hid them first of all in order to pardon them later. ... I fought against you and you heaped bounty upon bounty, mercy on mercy, while I was adding sin to sin and evil upon evil. My heart grew harder and my eyes more blind; you made your glory shine before me and I turned my eyes away so as not to see it. You called me and I turned away, but you, Lord, did not become angry with me. You have beaten me! Yes; you have beaten me at last! You have proved stronger than I. Vanquished, I praise you and bless your name, I lay down my arms, my conqueror, and place them in your hands.

II. BLESSED JOHN OF AVILA

(One of his finest sermons is that for the fourth Sunday of Lent. The latter part of it is summarized here.)

The main theme is the banquet which God has prepared for us:

1. *The excellence of this banquet:*

You must know that God has a banquet prepared for us the mere savour of which will be sufficient to maintain your souls.

This meal made St Paul, St Francis, St Dominic, St Lucy, St Clare . . . despise all the riches and pleasures of the earth. What perfume is it which smells so sweet that you despise riches and marriages with kings in order to suffer torments? Do not be afraid, because he who savours the things of God despises the things of this world.

2. *Banquet of goodness and truth:*

What is there in heaven; what shall we have to eat? Truth and goodness; things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard.

(a) Each one will live content with his own glory:

The saint who has a lower place wishes those who are higher to have more glory than he, because he is so in agreement with the divine will that in everything God does he finds reason for praise and in all things desires that his will should be done. Thus, seeing that the other worked more, he desires that he should have more.

(b) The food is God:

To what does God invite me? That I should eat, drink and rest at his table. What does God eat? Of his own knowledge of himself, his own love, his own honour. This is the food which the blessed have in glory; to honour God, to know him and to give him glory. There have been saints in this world who had such a great fire of love in their hearts for heavenly things that to live in this life was for them the greatest torment, seeing that they were as yet deprived

of God. ... So great is the tire of love in the blessed rejoicing in God that they are burnt up for love of him.

3. *Jfe mustfirst eat thefive loaves of the cross:*

Do you wish to rejoice at the heavenly table ? You must first eat of the five barley loaves which, although they are bitter, are a great advantage; you must first pass through labours here if you would enjoy the rest of heaven. You see Mt Tabor, how wonderful it is? Well, if you want to enjoy it you must first of all stand on Calvary.

(a) The bread of repentance:

The first bread is that of repentance of heart. If you eat of the bitterness of sins, if you weep for them and repent of them, if you rend (as the prophet says) not your garments but your hearts; if, I say, you eat of this bread, then later you shall eat of the bread of glory. The pain passes, but after the pain comes the glory and the joy; the pain must give way to confidence that you will find pardon; any other pain is but a temptation of the devil. . . .

(b) The bread of confession:

If you go to the feet of the confessor and you confess with sorrow and in very truth, then you have eaten another bread which, although bitter, is in many ways sweet. It is a bitter bread to have to go to a confessor and tell him your sins, manifesting to him your evils just as you did them; but this bitterness is converted into sweetness, the sweetness of pardon and reconciliation to God's friendship. . . .

(c) The bread of reparation:

Put your hand into your purse; content your neighbour if he was discontented with you. It hurts! It is barley bread and bitter; but while your neighbour had anything against you, know that God could not be contented with you.

i :

(d) The bread of alms:

Give alms in order to feed both body and soul. Think of the Giver who was not content with giving us life, riches, health and all the rest that we possess, but gave us himself and also shed his blood for us. If the Lord has given his blood for us, it should not hurt us to give him a little bread or a coin or two in his necessity....

Therefore have compassion on your neighbour and help him in his need, because what you give to him you give to Christ.

(e) The bread of pardon for injuries:

Brethren, in reverence for that pain which Christ felt when they nailed his hands to the cross, open your hearts and love those whom now you hate, forgive those who have injured you. But, Father, it hurts. Well, that which hurts a great deal, give it to God, since he with so much pain gave his life for you and pardoned those who put him to death. Bitter bread it is, but so useful. As St Augustine

says, I do not know of anything we preach which is more useful to you than to pardon your enemies.

4. *How we can make sweeter the bread of the cross:*

(a) With our devotion:

What shall I do, I who wish to be chaste and yet find another law in my members which fights against that of my mind? I find my heart hard when it comes to forgiveness, my hands tied when I seek to pay what I owe; what shall I do? Go to Jesus Christ and say to him: Lord, I cannot cat this bread; give me a little honey, a little sweetness, a little devotion: help me that I may do thy will; and in this way you will discover great happiness in that which formerly seemed so difficult.

(b) With the word of God:

If this bread seems hard, look in the Scriptures and find a word of God with which to support yourselves. What shall I do who am vain, proud, jealous when another receives courtesies which are not extended to me, when I see another seated in a place of honour before me? Take this word: unless you become as a little child you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. He that humbles himself shall be exalted and he that exalts himself shall be humbled.

III. FRAY LUIS OF GRANADA

(The extracts are taken from his book *Prayer and Meditation*—a work not so well known as the *Sinner's Guide,* but full of matter taken mainly from the Fathers of the Church.)

1. *The grandeur of mercy:*

Among Christians the mere authority of God should be enough against all these difficulties and should make us put aside everything except his commandment, as St Basil advises in one of his homilies: If you should have two loaves and a poor man comes to your door, take one and give it to him for the love of God. And when you give it lift up your hands to heaven and say: Lord, this bread I give for your love, even though it harm me; but I esteem your commandment more than my advantage, and of this little which I have I give a loaf to him that hath need of it. The mere beauty of this fidelity and obedience will be enough to overcome this small difficulty.

2. *Reasons for this grandeur:*

(a) It makes man like God:

Certainly the greatest perfection which a creature can have is to be like God, his creator; and the more he possesses this likeness the more perfect he will be. And it is also certain that one of the

things most fitting to God is to have mercy, according to that prayer of the Church: Lord God, to whorn it is proper to have mercy and to pardon. .. . And she says that this is proper to God because just as the creature, from rhe mere fact of his condition, is poor and needy, so, on the contrary, since God is infinitely rich and powerful, to him alone it belongs to give without receiving and for that reason to him alone properly speaking belongs mercy and pardon.

(b) It makes us God's friends:

To this excellence we may add another which follows from it, namely, the favour at court which belongs to those who have merev by reason of this ven' likeness to God. Because if it is true that likeness is the cause of love and if the merciful man is like God, it follows that he must be more loved by him.

(c) It gives us a right to God's mercy:

Which statement has many proofs from God in the Scriptures. In one place he says: Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy; and in another place: Never turn thy back on any man who is in need, and the Lord, in thv own need, will have eyes for thee (Tob. 4. 7).

These and other authorities show how careful God is to use mercy towards those who have mercy on others. But the Holy Spirit is not content with that, because he goes further, making God a debtor of him who shows mercy, as we can show' from two places in Scripture if we put them together. In one place he says: Befriend the poor and lend to the Lord; he will repay faithfully (Prov. 19. 17), and in the other: Rich rules poor, debtor must wait on creditor (Prov. 22. 7). If this is true then God is the captive of the merciful man, since this man lent money to God.

(d) It obtains pardon for our sins:

Undoubtedly, although there are many other ways of obtaining this pardon for our sins, yet one of the most certain and important is this. For this there are many proofs in the Scriptures: No fire burns so high but water may quench it; alms-giving was ever sin's atoning, says Ecclesiasticus (3. 33). Tobias says to his son: Alms-deeds were ever a sovereign way of escape from guilt and death, a bar against the soul's passage into darkness; none has less to fear when he stands before the most high God than he who does them (Tob. 4. 11). Our Lord says: Nay, you should give alms out of the store you have, and at once all that is yours becomes clean (Luke 11. 41). This is one of the chief means of obtaining pardon for sin and when it is missing he is in danger who asks for mercy. As one Doctor says: in vain shall he stretch out his hands towards God in a plea for pardon of sins who did not extend them to help his neighbour when he was able.

(c) It is a source of merit:

Thc reason is that this work of mercy, in so far as it is difficult, makes satisfaction, and because it is motivated by charity it is meritorious, thus with one, what we owe is paid, and with the other that which we have is enriched. . . . Why then do we not transfer our riches to that place where our life is to be eternal ? What a foolish thing it is says St John Chrysostom, to store up goods in a place you will have to leave and not to transfer them to the place where you will live for ever.

(f) Help in time of need:

If the Lord says: Thc measure you award to others is the measure that will be awarded to you, it is only just that he who helps his neighbour in his need shall himself be assisted by God when he is in need. If faithful men and friends are accustomed to pay back the help that is given to them and to succour in due time those who have helped them, what will be the attitude of that most faithful Lord who has so many times stated that what is done to the poor is done to him? (Matt. 25. 41).

(g) Efficacious in prayer:

Just as you heard the pleas of the poor man when he asked for mercy, so it is just that God should hear yours when you pour them out to him. After the prophet Isaias has said: Share thy bread with the hungry, give the poor and the vagrant a welcome to thy house ... he goes on to say: Then the Lord will listen to thee when thou callest on him: cry out, and he will answer, I am here at thy side (Isaias 58. 6-9).

(h) Defence in the day of judgement:

How secure will he be in his cause who appears before God on that day dressed in the garb of mercy. ... If the Lord himself shall attack him, accusing him of faults against the seven deadly sins into which he has fallen, then he may well reply: Lord, in satisfaction for those seven sins I present to you the seven works of mercy which I have always practised for love of you. You said: Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. You said: The measure you award to others is the measure that will be awarded to you (Luke 6. 38). You said: Alms-deeds were ever a sure way of escape from guilt and death; a bar against the soul's passage into darkness (Tob. 4. 11). You said that mercy gives its judgement an honourable welcome; that is to say, that it prevails over justice, for what the judgement condemns mercy forgives. Well, Lord, may your words stand in truth for ever, and pardon him who has done mercy to others.

IV. J.-B. MASSILLON·

1. *The lesson taught by today's Gospel:*

The Lord could have sent down manna from heaven: instead he made use of his disciples to distribute the bread ... in which he wishes to teach us all the importance of alms-deeds. Following the various scenes of this Gospel we shall study the need for alms-deeds, the excuses which are sometimes put forward for not doing it and the way in which it should be done.

2. *The need for alms-deeds:*

The law of God on this point is so clear that it cannot be denied. God, who was, and is, so careful to share out the food to the animals, allowed on the other hand an unequal distribution of this world's goods among men. The reason is obvious, it is so that the richer may help the poorer. Religion has insisted on this obligation and sanctified it.

3. *The excuses:*

(a) the rich are not owners of what is superfluous, but administrators:

There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fishes ... (John 6. 9.) The first excuse.—we have barely enough for our own needs. Allowing for the fact that we have a right to what is necessary to support us according to our condition, it is also true that we have no right to those things which remain over and above this. All that which only goes to feed the life of the senses, flatter our passions, vanity and worldly abuses, all that, I say, is superfluous and should be set apart as the inheritance of the poor, under penalty of usurpation and injustice, because you are only administrators of it. Just because you have been bom rich that does not mean that you are dispensed from living simply and modestly. You are like the Jews in the desert who collected more manna than they should and then found that it was useless. Jesus forbade ostentation for everyone—not only for the poor. The Gospel condemns luxury and worldly life and then God heaps riches on you. Why? So that you can waste them on that which God has condemned ' No, but so that you could be ministers of divine providence.

(b) The excuse of the difficulties of the times is not a valid one:

This is a lonely place and it is late already . . . (Mark 6. 35). That is: the times are evil and the world is in a bad state; there are droughts, wars. . . if that is so, then even more reason for not letting the people go away hungry. If the times are evil for you, what will they be like for the poor? Do you not wish to suffer at all?

♦ From the Sermon on Almsgiving in *Collected Sermons.*

What is more, these calamities are chastisements for the hardness of your hearts towards the poor. God takes revenge on your goods for the bad use you make of them. In the midst of calamities then you should hasten to pay back for your sins with that one means by which they can be wiped out—generosity towards the poor.

The times arc evil ? Yes; but tell me; in what have you given up the luxury of your way of living? Or do you reserve that for others? The purpose God has when he afflicts a nation is to remove from the rich the occasion of their luxury. Accommodate your lives then to God's plan and say with David: The sin is mine, the fault is mine; these sheep, what have they done? Nay, turn thy hand against me . . . (2 Kings 24. 17).

(c) The immense number of the poor:

Two hundred silver pieces would not buy enough bread for them, even to give each a little . . . (John 6. 7). There are so many poor! Why are there so many poor now ? There have always been wars and droughts and famines. . . . Because there has never been so much useless luxury and waste as there is now. If every one of you were to set aside a small portion of his goods and destine that portion for the relief of the poor; if you did this religiously and inviolably on counting your income and expenses, we should soon see the numbers of the poor diminish and a re-birth of peace and joy in the Church. But in actual practice no one looks on alms-giving as one of the essential obligations of the Christian life.

There are a great many poor ? That simply means that you will have to reduce still more those expenditures which might have been permitted in former times. You must look on yourself as one of the faithful, a member of Christ's body and a brother of the Christian who is afflicted with poverty.

4. *How alms-giving should be done:*

(a) Jesus worked his miracle in the desert, far from crowds:

What tricks our pride makes use of to make sure that our alms-giving shall be known to all, thus losing that sweet odour which it had before God. Nowadays plaques appear with the names of those who have given in support of some cause. Why ? So that God will not forget them ? So that the priests, on the way to the altar, shall be burdened not merely with their own sins together with those of the people, but also with the weight of your vanity ? Is it not enough if they are written in the book of life ? Custom may explain the abuse, but it does not justify it. Do your alms-giving in secret.

(b) Jesus gave equally to all:

There were no exceptions or privileges. Charity is universal and despises all caprice which opens the heart to some and closes it to others.

There are people who limit their alms-deeds to a certain amount and then remain unaffected by any disaster, no matter how great. Jesus did not wait to find out who was poor and who was not in the crowd.

(c) Charity is affable, as Christ was compassionate:

Sometimes our charity is accompanied with such hardness that a refusal might have appeared more kind. If the poor man were not so subjected by his necessity he might well fling your alms-deed back in your face saying: Of what do you accuse me? Of a lazy life? Lazier than your own? That I do not make use of my strength to work? And what use do you make of yours?

(d) Jesus did not wait to be asked:

Shepherds are expected to look after their sheep, and they are shepherds who have something. If you should be in a position of authority do not allow misfortune to surround you without even being aware of it perhaps. Through your hands passes the sweat of so many workmen; be interested in them. . . . How many times we come across the ruin of great fortunes, sad relics of an ancient splendour! If they could only speak they might well say to us: Do you see these sad signs of our ancient grandeur? W'ell, they are the tears of the poor whom we despised. Do not act thus; but rather let alms-deeds be the support of your house.

V. BOSSUET

(A brief scheme of a sermon for the fourth Sunday of Lent.)

I. *Introduction:*

(a) A petition of the Our Father which is not put into practice:

Give us this day our daily bread—if we understood this properly we would not ask for more than we need nor would we weep so long and so often for the superfluous.

(b) Three classes of goods, three vices and three remedies:

The purpose of the preacher is to demonstrate that we are all far from taking heed of St Paul's words: Empty-handed we came into the world, and empty-handed, beyond question, we must leave it; why, then, if we have food and clothing to last us out, let us be content with that (i Tim. 6. 8). Three classes of temporal goods: those strictly necessary for life; a certain abundance; the grandeur and power of great fortunes. Three vices which lead us to misuse them: in the matter of what is strictly necessary—worry about them; in the question of abundance—dissipation and luxury; in the matter of great fortunes—ambition.

Against those three vices the Gospel of today suggests three remedies: in necessary goods—confidence in divine providence; in superfluous—care not to waste them; in greatfortunes—flee from ambition, as Christ did when they wanted to crown him king.

2. *Providence and that which is necessary for life:*

The preacher makes the following points, based on Matthew 6. 31-33: You have a Father in heaven who knows that you need them all. Make it your first care to find the kingdom of God, and his approval, and all these things shall be yours without the asking.

(a) God does not forbid us to make moderate provision for our necessities, as Christ did and St Paul, who worked with his hands rather than live on alms from the faithful.

(b) Providence is only concerned with what is absolutely necessary. God sustains life—not luxury. We should not complain when we see the luxury in which others live. We have our bread and God has not promised us more than that. God promises that he will give us what we need for our life, not that which our ambition or avarice craves.

(c) The promise is only made to the good. Not that God refuses to help the wicked or that he does not do so; but the actual promise on which our confidence rests is directed to the good only. His only obligation is to look after those who are of his household.

(d) God has given us no assurance that we shall not feel need.

i. *The essential point of this doctrine.* When God punished the Chosen People with famine, all suffered, both good and bad; St Paul suffered hunger, and in his epistle to the Hebrews he describes the Christians as poor and needy (Heb. 11. 31).

If we read the Gospel carefully we shall see that our Saviour not merely wishes to deprive us of what is superfluous, but also he wants to make us rise above even that which is necessary. 'Faith knows no necessity', says Tertullian, 'because if it despises life itself why should it not also despise hunger? Know that to suffer hunger for God's sake is no less acceptable to him than to suffer any kind of death.'

ii. *Essential and accidentalpromises.* Just as a man has two kinds of goods, those of the body and those of the soul, so God has made two kinds of promises, those which refer to the soul and those which apply to the body. If you seek first the kingdom of God then the rest will be given to you—that is the accidental. The essential promises are infallible; but in the case of those which affect the body all will depend on the spiritual good which God sees in them. Our Father in heaven may prescribe for us good things or bad, according as he sees our spiritual need, just as a doctor may prescribe either diet or food.

(e) There is a reason for sufferings; and this is proved from the fact that God looks after the material creation with so much care and attention. Therefore he will look after us in the same way and if we suffer there will be a reason for it.

We have to remain serene under this trial, not allowing it to shake our faith in God and in his providence.

One thing alone is necessary—the kingdom of God and our eternal happiness. If we lose our home, we have another in heaven; if it is goods, we have our merits to fall back on; our health, we have his grace which is the health of the soul. It is an article of faith that either God will provide in some way or, if he allows us to want in the matter of temporal goods, then it is to reward us in spiritual goods which are greater. After that to be anxious and worried is blindness.

3. *That which is superfluous:*

(a) We must not waste it. The manna is a good example; what was superfluous was hard and useless the following day.

(b) The world has created for itself a false necessity, based on new laws unknown to nature. I am not hungry' or thirsty, I have the necessary clothes and sufficient heat, yet I am poor, because I cannot live in this pretended luxury'.

(c) Caprices also enter into this picture. The price of a thing is not now judged according to its real value, but according to the demands of caprice, which looks for something extraordinary, rather than ordinary.

(d) The teaching of Christ is quite the opposite. He preaches sobriety in all things. At our first step towards him in baptism he made us promise that we would renounce the world and its pomps, because we have been buried together with Christ in his death, so that we may rise to a new life. It is more important to be temples of God than to be well dressed from the worldly point of view. Think of the humanity of Christ, so brutally stripped of his garments and then ask yourselves why you are not ashamed to go about so richly dressed. 'But you come to church more sumptuously adorned than the temple itself. . . showing off your riches in that very place where Christ hides himself under such humble appearances. . . . You do not want to think about his humanity, so cruelly stripped, but about your own rich garments; nor about his blood which saved souls but on how your looks may' lose them. . . .'

4. *Ambition:*

(a) a rule given by St Augustine: that we may desire the honours of this world only if we do so for the benefit they will bring to others, not for themselves.

(b) another, of St Leo: let each one, within his limits, use his power in the vast field of charity. All wish to advance higher; do you wish the same thing, but in charity, not in other matters.

SECTION VI. PAPAL TEXTS

A: The Church is interested in material necessities

1. The desire to obtain sufficient happiness here on earth comes from God and the Church seconds it.

> We are aware, venerable brethren, that in this battle for the defence of religion we must make use of all lawful means at our disposal. Therefore, following in the wise path of our predecessor, Leo XIII of saintly memory, in Our Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* We advocated so energetically a more equitable distribution of the goods of the earth, and indicated the most efficacious means of restoring health and strength to the ailing social body, and tranquillity and peace to its suffering members. For the unquenchable aspiration to reach a suitable state of happiness even on earth is planted in the heart of man by the Creator of all things, and Christianity has always recognized and ardently promoted every just effort of true culture and sound progress for the perfecting and developing of mankind (Pius XI *Caritate Christi compulsi,* 3 May 1932).

2. The root of all the world's evil can be found in the disordered seeking after merely material prosperity; since at times we are inclined to despise the spiritual goods of the soul when we are more prosperous. Material property is always ordered essentially towards the life of the spirit and for this reason it cannot satisfy entirely the longings of the heart of man for happiness. (Cf. Pius XII, *Christmas Message,* 1943; Pius XI, *Ubi arcano Dei,* 23 Dec. 1922; Leo XIII, *Sapientiae Christianae,* 10 Jan. 1890.)

> Men strive to overcome one another simply to get possession of the good things of this life. Nothing is less thought of among men than the eternal blessings which Jesus Christ offered, unfailingly, through his Church, for all to gain, and all strive insatiably to attain the fleeting and failing goods of earth. But it is of the very nature of material things that, when sought unrestrainedly, they bring with them every sort of evil, moral abasement and dissensions first of all. For as in themselves they are mean and common, they cannot satisfy the noble aspirations of the human heart, which was created by God and for God and cannot rest until it finds the true rest in God himself (Pius XI).

3. Often the working classes separate themselves from the Church as if she had no thought for them (Pius XII to the Minister General of the Franciscans, 4 Dec. 1949). Thus many have abandoned the Church because they believe that she has not worried about the necessities of the common people (Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno).*

This has been brought about through the fault of those in the Church who have not given sufficient thought to Justice and Charity. The Popes have always condemned this way of acting, and history itself proves that the Church has always procured the good of society'. She could not have done it better even had the earthly end of man been her principal object in view.

> It is certainly lamentable, Venerable Brethren, that there have been, and still are even now, some who, while professing themselves to be Catholics, are well-nigh unmindful of that sublime law of justice and charity' which binds us, not merely to give each man his due, but to succour our needy brethren as Christ himself; worse still, that there are those who, out of greed for gain, do not fear to oppress the workers. Indeed there are some who even abuse religion itself, trying to cloak their own unjust impositions under its name, that they may protect themselves against the manifestly just protests of their employees. We shall never desist from gravely censuring such conduct (Pius XI, *Qtiadr. Anno).*

B: The Church is a Mother who looks after all

The Church is not merely for the workers, she is for all men. The voice of the Pope is the voice of Christ; he is the common father of all, both of die faithful and of those who have gone astray. Like Christ, the Church has compassion on the multitude, hungry for the word of God and often for material food as well (Pius XII to the delegates of the European nations in the F.A.O. 22 Feb. 1948). She has always protected the worker, not merely with vain words, but with a just guardianship. 'Take into your hands, beloved sons, the declarations of the Popes on the social question and the condition of the workers. These are not vain words or empty promises which cannot afterwards be kept or put into practice; they are a powerful, efficacious and just guardianship of the worker, his work and his well-being' (Pius XII, to the workers of the Roman Electrical Society, 2 July 1950).

C; Looking for the eternal end in view

i. Against all powers the Church has always looked for her end; to guide men to eternal happiness. She assures material goods when she inculcates the profound obligations of charity, benignity and liberality.

> So also as to the duties of each one towards his fellow men, mutual forbearance, kindliness, generosity, are placed in the ascendant; the man who is at once a citizen and a Christian is not drawn aside by conflicting obligations; and, lastly, the abundant benefits with which the Christian religion, of its very nature, endows even the mortal life of man, are acquired for the community and

civil society. And this to such an extent that it may be said in sober truth: The condition of the commonwealth depends on religion with which God is worshipped; and between one and the other there exists an intimate and abiding connection (Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei,* Nov. 1885).

2. She contributes to the social well-being particularly through the creation of Catholic families. However, it is useless to seek a flourishing material prosperity if at the same time the supernatural virtues are not inculcated. (Cf. Pius XII, *Il centenario de Puerto Principe,* 8 Dec. 1949, and Leo XIII, *Graves de Communi,* 18 Jan. 1901.)

Leo XIII says:

For it is the opinion of some, which is taken up by the masses, that the 'social question' as they call it, is merely economic. The precise opposite is the truth, that it is first of all moral and religious, and for that reason its solution is to be expected mainly from the moral law and the pronouncements of religion. For suppose the productiveness of capital doubled, the hours of labour shortened, food cheap; yet if the wage-earner listens to teaching—as he commonly does—and acts on it, teaching which tends to destroy reverence for God and to corrupts morals, his labour too, necessarily deteriorates and his earnings fail. It is found by practical experience that many a workman lives poorly and miserably in spite of shorter hours and higher wages, because of his character being bad and religion having no hold on him. Without the instincts which Christian religion implants and keeps alive, without providence, self-control, thrift, endurance and other natural qualities, you may try your hardest, but prosperity you cannot provide *{Graves de Communi).*

D: The spirit of the liturgy of today: Rejoice, O Jerusalem

Pope Pius XII, in an allocution delivered on the first anniversary of his pontificate, gives a summary of the meaning of the joy the Church instils into us today. He makes the following points:

I. In the midst of penance and fasting the Church becomes a herald of Joy. In spite of present worries and preoccupations and the threats of even worse things to come we must seek the joy of the soul. 'Beloved sons; if the Church whose wise teaching joins both austerity and sweetness in one perfect harmony, today bids us rejoice, we who are sunk in sadness, and if We, in a moment of intimate contact with you, do not hesitate to repeat that counsel, it is not that we have forgotten your worries. This "rejoice" which comes from the mouth of the Church, our Mother, teaches us to find the serene joy of the soul even in the sufferings of nature and bitterness of heart.'

2. We are the sons of God, called to liberty; we are the sons of our Mother the Church who, like Sara, did not give birth to slaves, but to free men, with that liberty which is the gift of Christ.

Oh! Christ, our Saviour; your doctrine of universal brotherhood has given back to the human person the inviolable liberty to serve you with a pure and serene conscience. May you be blessed for ever for it. Is it not right that, at this thought, your sons, the heirs to the future Jerusalem, should cry out with joy: Rejoice, Jerusalem.'

3. Thus we must have confidence in our Father, even in the darkness of tribulation. We must tear ourselves away from the slavery' of temporal things in order to give ourselves up entirely as sons to the fulfilment of our duty. 'Those souls in whom the faith has become deeply rooted and whose lives are a constant effort to live in conformity with **it**. . . tear themselves way from the slavery' of material things and acquire, against all that the world can offer or refuse, that freedom and liberty' which is a sign of the sons of God. The constant thought of this divine sonship produces in them a feeling of complete security, even in the midst of sufferings, trials and difficulties of this life. Even though the very' ground may rock beneath their feet, they do not tremble; in them are realized the comforting words of the Apostle of the Gentiles, addressed to the primitive Roman church: We are well assured that everything helps to secure the good of those who love God. The Psalmist had already sung: Cast the burden of thy cares upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee' (Ps. 54. 23). (Cf.: *Mater ofMagistra passim).*

SECTION VII. SERMON SCHEMES

I. LITURGICAL

A: Joy

Oasis in the desert of Lent

1. *Rejoice, Jerusalem:*

Half way through Lent and as if she could already see the Easter dawn, the Church brings to the faithful today a message of joy. To make this message more effective she changes the colour of her vestments to rose, dresses the altar with flowers and plays the organ once again.

2. *Motives for this joy:*

There are three in the liturgy of today:

(a) in the Epistle;

(b) in the Gospel;

(c) in the proximity of the Pasch.

B: The Epistle

1. *Sonship, which brings joy and liberty:*

The main thought in this passage of St Paul is that we are the sons of promise; we are not sons of the bond woman, but of the free; we do not belong to that synagogue which was ruled by a dead law, but to that Jerusalem founded by Christ and animated by his spirit. The Spirit of Christ is the spirit of liberty, not of slavery; of sonship.

2. *The obligation which this sonship brings with it:*

(a) The neophytes who were preparing themselves for baptism on the night of the Paschal vigil would undoubtedly hear these words with joy, and they would be a stimulus for a yet deeper preparation for the new life they would receive on that day.

(b) We, who have been baptized, conscious of the greatness which Christ has given us,

i. break out in words of praise because Christ has made us sons of God;

ii. remind ourselves that this gift implies that we must walk as sons, guided by the spirit of God. It is a gift which implies action in return.

C: The Eucharist

1. *The Gospel speaks to us of the Eucharist:*

(a) The Eucharist is a sure pledge of our resurrection; through it we are transformed into Christ, and he has risen from the dead. It is this glorious Christ who is the food of our souls; this is *living* bread simply because he is risen, as we shall one day rise with him.

(b) The Eucharist is a triumphant and lasting rejoicing; from it comes our joy today, when we see it symbolized in the bread which forms the matter for this miracle.

2. *The resurrection is fruit of penance:*

(a) Christ gave this bread, wonderfully multiplied, to those who had left their homes and had even forgotten their bodily necessities in order to hear his words. It was almost a reward for their generosity.

(b) In like manner, to those who continue along the rough road of penance during Lent Christ will also give a reward:

i. the resurrection;

ii. his own bread;

iii. the crowning reward for their labours in an eternal triumph.

D: The proximity of the Pasch

This also fills the soul with joy:

I. For the neophytes, because it is the day of their baptism.

2. For the faithful, through the solemnity with which it is clothed.

(a) Because it is the day of Christ's triumph, and a definitive triumph.

(b) Because in him we also triumph.

E: Today's joy as a stimulant for the rest of Lent

The slight rest in the Lenten fast stimulates us to greater efforts in this time of penance. We are reminded that:

(a) we still have a long way to go;

(b) we have to follow in Christ's footsteps until Good Friday;

(c) we should continue our fast, our prayers and our good works;

(d) in the Eucharist we have the bread which will strengthen us, as did that which was given to Elias to enable him to make his way up the mountain. With the help of the Eucharist we can reach the heights of Easter with new strength and devotion.

II. THE EPISTLE

A: True Liberty!

Two notions of liberty

1. *The Christian* (cf. *Exeg. and Mor. Notes,* pp. ιγ^iΓ.):

(a) St Paul repeats time and again that we enjoy the liberty of the sons of God, which means rather more than a mere liberation from the complicated Jewish ceremonial of the Old Law. Where the Lord's Spirit is, there is liberty (2 Cor. 3. 17).

(b) Christ said: So you will come to know the truth, and the truth will set you free ... if it is the Son who makes you free men, you will have freedom in earnest (John 8. 32-36).

2. *The worldly notion:*

(a) Freedom often means vice—we talk about a man living a free and easy life; here liberty' means subjection to vice.

(b) To be free, to please one's self, often means freedom from all law, whether divine or human; in this sense liberty means independence of God.

The structure of human liberty

1. *Liberty and the will:*

Liberty is a power of the will by which it can either act or refuse to act, choose between one course of action and another.

2. *Liberty and the intellect:*

Since the will is a blind faculty, needing the counsel of the intellect, to be really free it should follow the lead of the intellect choosing those things which the mind proposes to it as right and good. Liberty does not disappear when we follow this lead on the contrary, it reaches its perfection.

3. *Liberty and right independence:*

(a) Remember that it is a power of the will, not of the passions; the more independent it is the more free it is. The greater the outside influences brought to bear on the will the less chance it has of acting freely.

(b) This can reach a point where the human passions or an outside influence (such as drugs) can cloud the mind and dull the will to such an extent that it loses all freedom.

4. *Liberty and sin:*

Sin is not included in the notion of liberty, because God is absolutely free and yet he cannot sin.

Liberty or slavery: an inevitable dilemma

1. *The slavery of the will submitted to the passions:*

(a) In the light of these principles it is easy to see that to allow ourselves to be led by our passions is not liberty; instead it implies that we are less free and it can become slavery.

(b) To allow the will to be dragged along by the current is easy; real freedom is demonstrated by fighting against all harmful influences, from within or from without.

(c) The passions blind the intellect and the will; who will say that in such a state we have true freedom?

(d) One who allows himself to be led by every whim of his passions soon passes from a single act to a habit; from a habit to indifference, from thence to viciousness. Is not this slavery?

2. *Two testimonies to confirm this:*

(a) Those especially who follow the defiling appetites of their corrupt nature, and make light of authority. So bold are they, so obstinate, that they are not afraid to bring in new and blasphemous ways of thought . . . they will have the reward their wickedness has deserved. To live in luxury while the day lasts is all their pleasure; what a stain they are, what a disfigurement, when they revel in the luxury of their own banquets, as they fare sumptuously at your side.

(b) Their eyes feast on adultery, insatiable of sin; and they know how to win wavering souls to their purpose. . . . Using fine phrases that have no meaning, they bait their hook with the wanton appetites of sense, to catch those who have had but a short respite from false teaching. What do they offer them? Liberty. And all the time they are enslaved to worldly corruption; whatever influence gets the better of a man becomes his master (2 Peter 2. 10-19).

(c) The wise man is not a slave because he knows how not to do anything against his own will and intellect, obliged to it by force. All evil men arc but slaves.

(d) In the case of John the Baptist and Herod, who was the slave and who the free man? \\as it Herod, who appreciated John and would have listened to him had it not been for the fact that he could not resist Herodias; or was it not rather John, who was bound in chains for maintaining the truth of his preaching? (Cf. second Sunday of Advent, Exeg. and Moral Notes.)

The secret of liberty is true subjection

1. *Liberty and due dependence:*

(a) If liberty disappears through subjection to the passions, it reaches its perfection in subjection to the law.

(b) Libert}· is not total independence, but rather a recognition of our due dependence. He who does what he should do because he wills to do it is really free, and since freedom should act according to the dictates of reason, he acts perfectly.

2. *Three kinds of liberty:*

(a) that of the animals, who have no laws which subject their appetites because they are incapable of knowing them;

(b) that of the rebellious, who think themselves free because they refuse to obey;

(c) that of the sons of God, who submit themselves with love to his will.

3. These rebels should remember that they are men and should not affect a liberty which makes them like the brutes. As Tertullian says: God gave the law to man, not to deprive him of liberty·, but as a manifestation of his appreciation. Adam was the first one to confuse freedom with license.

Liberty in Christ

We can now understand how it is that Christ has made us free; not merely by freeing us from sin, death, etc. (cf. following scheme) but by strengthening our freedom of the will of which we have spoken.

This he does in two ways;

1. *By giving us the knowledge of the truth:*

(a) the truth shall make you free (John 8. 32);

(b) this truth is Christ, the way, the truth and the life (John 14.6).

(c) One who gazes into that perfect law, which is the law of freedom, and dwells on the sight of it, does not forget its message; he finds something to do and does it, and his doing of it wins him a blessing (James 1. 25).

2. *By giving us his grace:*

By this our will is strengthened against the demands of the passions.

B: The liberty of Christ

Redemption and liberty

1, *St Paul speaks of it many times:*

2. *It is a fruit of the redemption:*

To redeem means to translate something or someone from a state of slavery into that of liberty by paying a ransom.

The captivity: its causes

We went into it voluntarily, submitting ourselves to it through sin. The sin of our first parents left us subject to a multiple captivity:

1. *Of sin.*

(a) St Ignatius, in his meditation on sin, asks us to imagine the soul chained and in prison. The first chain which binds it is that of sin.

(b) The habitual state of sin is that which follows from an actual sin; and in that state the soul is:

i. out of step with the rest of the universe;
ii. destined for hell instead of for God and heaven;
iii. all that comes afterwards is due to this state of evil in which the soul is captive.

2. *The anger of God:*

(a) which must hate evil—in this case the soul;
(b) who must defend his honour offended by our sin;
(c) and desire justice.

3. *Of the devil:*

to whom God permits a certain dominion over the evil ones in this world and the power of tormenting them in the next.

4. *Of death:*

(a) Man before sin was immortal by reason of a privilege which God had granted him.

(b) But after sin death entered into this world and took possession of it.

5. *Of concupiscence, and the passions:*

(a) Man, composed as he is of body and soul, has both spiritual and carnal desires—often in conflict.

(b) Before sin man did not feel this double struggle, because by another privilege God had given his reason power over the lower appetites.

(c) After sin God withdrew this gift and now reason finds itself, not only at war with the passions but also in such a state of inferiority that, left to itself, it can never overcome them.

(d) In this inferiority is the slavery of concupiscence of which St Paul speaks.

Impossibility of attaining freedom

The root of this impossibility—man, now an enemy of God, cannot win God's friendship in justice, because that would suppose returning to God the infinite honour which alone could pay him back for the offence, also in a certain way infinite, which man had committed. Meanwhile man remains subject to the captivity of sin and the anger of God; nor can he free himself from the other three captivities, because to do that it is first of all necessary:

(a) that God should withdraw the decree which subjects man to the devil—and God is now his enemy, remember;

(b) that he should return to man the gifts of immortality and immunity from concupiscence.

The liberty of Christ

1. *Cause:*

The redemption.

2. *Effects:*

In this life the essential effects are obtained, and, imperfectly in this life and perfectly in the next, the accidental ones.

(a) Freedom from sin:

i. The soul is now clean and beautiful in God's sight—his son, in fact.

ii. With power to avoid mortal sin and do supernatural works which can merit heavenly rewards.

iii. There is no need for it to do anything else except put itself in contact with the Passion of Christ in the waters of baptism.

iv. We have nothing else to do but retain this holiness.

(b) Freedom from God's anger:

i. Once we are made good God loves us, both in so far as we are good and also as the objects of his Son's redemption.

ii. We come from the waters of baptism so pure and clean that nothing can delay our entry into heaven. Those who die immediately after baptism do not even have to pass through purgatory.

(c) From the devil:

He now has merely the authority to tempt us, but no longer has he any dominion over us. If we fall it is because we wish to do so.

(d) From death:

We shall die, but it will be no more than a brief sleep, because Christ has won for us the future resurrection when we shall have our bodies once again.

(c) From concupiscence:

This is one of the most interesting elements of this freedom.

Perhaps the fight still seems to us to be a hard one; but in reality the passions are not now invincible. The weakness of our reason has been corrected by grace.

St Paul felt this struggle, and asks, Who is to set me free from a nature doomed to death? In his answer he does not reply 'death', but simply, Nothing else than the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 7. 25).

At times we exaggerate the force of the passions, which is nearly always due to:

i. our poor resistance;

ii. the habit of giving way to them which we contract and which weakens our resistance and strengthens them.

Christ has freed us by his grace.

Christian liberty and Jewish slavery

1. *St PauVs statement:*

Why does he call those slaves who live under the Jewish law?

2. *The reason:*

(a) First of all, because of the mass of precepts and laws which bound them, as opposed to the relative freedom of the Christian from such slavery.

(b) If the Jews received pardon and grace (to the extent of having great saints among them) it was not through the law, but through the anticipated merits of Christ's redemption, which that law represented in a symbolic manner.

(c) Even if the morally good Jew found himself free, still it was only a relative and incomplete freedom.

(d) The just still found the gates of heaven closed to them and had to go to Limbo.

(e) There was less grace in those days than after the actual coming of Christ.

(f) The sacraments as we know them did not exist, and they are an abundant source of graces. What a boon is confession which forgives without the need for perfect contrition. Think of the efficacy of the Eucharist which joins us so intimately to God.

(g) As yet there was no Mother of God to run to as a means of intercession.

III. THE GOSPEL

A: It is for you to give them food to eat

A command which is for all time

1. The scene of the Gospel in synthesis is none other than Christ feeding the multitude through the ministry' of the Apostles.
2. Every' scene in the Gospels has a deeper meaning, hidden under the external scenes of a miracle, an action or a parable. The Apostles received this command for that one day and also for the whole of the future life of the Church. They are still today the only true deposits of the spiritual food of souls.

Christ the only one who feeds

1. In the heart of Christ we see his mercy as he takes compassion on the hungry crowd.

2. Only in his hands lay the power to work this miracle; at the same time he was and is the only preacher of the true religion and medicine for those who are sick.

3. *He is the only true bread of life which gives life to men:*
   (a) The rest of the sixth chapter of St John talks of this.
   (b) This miracle is written down there as a preparation for the doctrine which follows it up.

4. Christ is the living bread, come down from heaven to give eternal life, we can eat of this bread:
   (a) through faith born in us through the revealed w'ord of God;
   (b) by sanctifying grace which communicates divine life to us;
   (c) by means of the sacraments, channels of grace, which increase that life;
   (d) above all by the Eucharist, w'hich contains the very author of grace, in the reception of which our perfect union with Christ as food is accomplished.

Distributors of the bread of life

i. These are the priests, who should perpetuate the passage of Christ through the world.
   (a) As Pius XII says: The priest is the very hand of God, the most powerful instrument of love, of pardon, of redemption ever given to fallen man to free him from the wiles and slavery of Satan and to return him to the heavenly Father, as a son re-born to life, dressed in the garment of grace, an heir to heaven, nourished with a living bread more salutary than the fruit of the tree of life, planted in the midst of paradise *{Address to parish priests and missioners,* Rome, 1940).
   (b) Christ sent his priests with the same mission that he received.

(c) Eor which reason the Apostles felt themselves to be 'ministers of Christ and dispensers of the mysteries of God' (1 Cor. 4. 1).

(d) The priest may say of himself, because of the ministerial grace of the priesthood: Yet I am alive, or rather not I; it is Christ that lives in me (Gal. 2. 20).

2. The priest has the same office and performs the same tasks as did the apostles for the crowd:

(a) As a wise doctor he feeds the people with the word of God, making sure that it reaches everyone.

(b) The priest, as a king, gives us Christ, who is the Way; teaches and insists that we follow the path of the commandments, all reduced to that of love.

(c) As pontiff, the priest gives us and increases in us the life of grace, and in the Eucharistic miracle he gave us the bread of life.

(d) Thus too he sees to it that we fulfil the commandments of justice and charity.

The necessary co-operation

i. In order that the bread of God's word may have its effect we must do our part, listening to it eagerly, following out its teaching, and helping others to appreciate it better.

B: It is for you to give them food to eat

The way the miracle is accomplished: the multiplication of the bread

1. *The data:*

(a) on the one hand the invitation of Christ to the Apostles that they should feed the multitude;

(b) the difficulty explained clearly by Philip;

(c) the insufficiency of the means at their disposal as put before Christ by Andrew; five loaves and two fishes.

Christ, however, does not rectify his command; he knows the means at hand and the obligation involved in his command. His command is kept, because it is the Apostles who feed the multitude —with the bread wffiich Christ had blessed and broken into pieces.

2. The events of that day are repeated each day in the sacerdotal ministry.

(a) The whole life of the Church is one long multiplication of the earthly and the heavenly bread.

(b) Christ shows us how to do this.

The circumstances of the miracle

1. *He took in his hands thefive barley loaves:*

(a) Christ did not need the bread in order to satisfy the hunger of the crowd, the nothing from which all things were created would

have served him just as well now as it did then. However, he used the co-operation of men on this occasion.

(b) In the communication of the supernatural life to men all means, no matter what they may be, are of themselves insufficient; but if they are placed entirely in the hands of Christ, they work the miracle of giving man that life.

2. *He lifted up his eyes to heaven :*

To the natural talents of man, put at the service of God, there must be added true humility, recognizing that:

(a) the sufficiency in the supernatural order comes from heaven;

(b) any spiritual increase is God's work;

(c) whatever gifts are worth having . . . these come to us from above; they are sent down by the Father of all that gives light, with whom there can be no change, no swerving from his course (James i. 17);

(d) all sacerdotal power is a gift from God. Christ receives all power and it is this power which he puts into the hands of his disciples (Matt. 28. 18). They can do nothing without him (John 15. 5).

3. *He gave thanks to God:*

(a) Christ gave thanks in his own name;

(b) he gave thanks for all the people;

(c) this humble acknowledgement and gratitude makes God ready to grant the miracle.

4. *He blessed it:*

The blessed bread distributed to the people makes us think:

(a) that, just as our blessing is a prayer, that of God is a free gift;

(b) that this blessing multiplied the bread;

(c) that it makes it something holy;

(d) that the priest and layman should treat as something holy even those things which are of the purely natural order.

5. *He broke it:*

(a) he broke it to prepare it for distribution—only thus could it be shared;

(b) the priest also has the obligation of breaking the bread of God's revelation to the people. His ministry does not free him from work, it increases his obligation to do all in his power.

6. *He gave it to his disciples:*

(a) so that they would not forget the miracle;

(b) so that they might understand that Christ wanted to give himself through them;

(c) that all should know what the priesthood means.

(d) so that the priest might realize that he must not deal unjustly

with that which he has received, but must distribute it among the people;

(c) so that we may understand how to form leaders and use collaborators in the work of the apostolate.

C: He lifted up his eyes

The eyes of the Master

1. The Gospel tells us twice today that Christ lifted up his eyes.

2. The Master's eyes give us a lesson.

He lifted up his eyes towards the crowd

1. This look which Jesus gave the crowd is not a mere accidental circumstance in the Gospel narrative; it has its importance. Let us see what he saw.

2. *WhatJesus saw:*

(a) The crowd:

In the forefront appears the crowd; the apostles see it as well; but their gaze was not like that of the Master.

(b) Its necessities:

Christ's eyes penetrate into the very hearts of those people and they reflect, through his privileged knowledge, all the necessities in their hearts; those empty spaces which he alone can fill.

(c) He spoke:

i. There is no record that the crowd complained to Christ of hunger.

ii. They were thirsty for the knowledge and doctrine which would show them the Messias, so long desired, among them.

iii. The love of Jesus anticipates the petition of the crowd and goes to meet their necessities before they give tongue to them.

(d) The eyes of the Master:

i. one day they admire the purity of the young man who kept the law, and they are joyful;

ii. on another occasion they see, without need for words, the struggle in the heart of the Magdalen, in which love has triumphed over sin;

iii. and later, not worried about his own situation, they will see the love of Peter, as he comes through the dark night of his betrayal, in the court of the High Priest.

3. *To what his gaze gives rise:*

(a) the whole scene of the miracle follows because Jesus' eyes rested on the people before him with mercy in them and love;

(b) his lips have placed themselves at the service of what those eyes have seen in order to say: I have compassion on the multitude;

(c) his hands and his omnipotence arc at once at the service of his mercv.

He looked up to heaven

1. On earth there was want and misery; in heaven the fullness of all good things.

2. With this look Jesus teaches us where we should seek our help in all difficulties, whether our own or of others.

3. He shows us that in heaven we can count on the infinite goodness and power of God to help us.

D: The Eucharist and pardon

Symbol of unity

1. *Testimonies of Fathers and theologians:*

(a) St Thomas says it, relying on a testimony of St Augustine, which he makes his own: Our Lord has given us his body and blood in things which, out of many units, are made one whole; for out of many grains is made one bread, and many grapes flow into one thing, namely wine. Therefore he observes elsewhere: O sacrament of pietv, O sign of unitv, O bond of charity (3.2. 79. a. 1. c)

(b) It is the constant teaching of Aquinas that the Eucharist:

i. is a figure of charity';

ii. is the cause of it;

iii. and this not only with regard to the love of God but also with regard to that of our neighbour.

2. *The Liturgy:*

(a) In the Secret for the Mass of *Corpus Christi·.* We beseech thee, O Lord, that thou wouldst grant thy Church those gifts of unity and peace which are mystically figured under these offerings which we make to thee.

(b) The same idea is found in the post-communion for Easter Sunday: Pour out upon us, O Lord, the Spirit of your charity, that, in your mercy, you may bring into unity' those whom you have fed with one bread.

It brings about this union: Because Christ is the head of his mystical body

1. If we receive Christ we also receive in some way all our brothers in Christ. We communicate with them; whether they be saints or sinners, friends or enemies, benefactors or detractors—the Eucharist unites us all.

2. Sin, on the other hand, disrupts unity. As Bd John of Avila says: The division of Adam comes about because from him each takes his own flesh. Whence, then does the unity come? From the flesh of

Christ. . . . There is only one flesh here. ... I shall give you one flesh and it shall be stronger than that of Adam; and you shall be one. That is to receive Communion.

The example of the early Christians

1. In the kiss of peace, still part of the Solemn High Mass, we can understand the importance the early Christians gave to the Eucharist as a symbol of unity.

(a) This rite is known throughout the whole of Christendom; St Justin mentions it in the second century.

(b) Everywhere it has always been considered as a sign of unity and peace. It was given before Communion in the Roman church at least since the fifth century.

2. The basis for it in the Gospels is that command of Christ: If thou art bringing thy gift, then, before the altar, and rememberest there that thy brother has some ground of complaint against thee, leave thy gift lying there before the altar, and go home; be reconciled with thy brother first, and then come back to offer thy gift (Matt. 5- 23).

3. As St Augustine says: Just as your face is brought near to that of your brother, so let your heart also be united with his.

Pardon

1. *Eucharist and pardon:*

(a) The Eucharist is incompatible with hatred and division among Christians, because in communion we are united with Christ and in Christ with our brethren.

(b) Pardon becomes easy if, above all the petty envies and difficulties, great or small, we think of the unity in Christ brought about by this Sacrament.

(c) If we do not know how to forgive then we do not communicate well.

(d) This value of the Eucharist is especially emphasized during Lent, when the Church calls upon all those who have been injured in some way by others to pardon them (cf. epistle of Friday after Ash Wednesday). It is the best form of fasting (cf. Isaias 58).

2. *Eucharist and charity:*

(a) Pardon is one aspect of charity; but it is a negative aspect; there are others.

(b) He who wishes to communicate well must be ready to practise many other forms of charity, such as:

i. charity in words;

ii. mutual help;

iii. a special care for those who are poorer than others, more humble and needy.

E: Eucharist: Bread of life

Our double life

1. There are two lives in man, one natural and the other supernatural; one corporal and one spiritual. But there is an analogy between them, so much so that, as St Thomas says: we can get a good idea of those things which exist in the spiritual life of grace from the things which we see in the corporal life (3. q. 72. a. 1. c).

2. Just as the corporal life needs food, so the spiritual; and the food of the spirit is the Eucharist.

The Eucharist: bread of life (cf. St Thomas, p. 191)

1. Our Lord affirms this many times in the Eucharistic discourse (cf. John 6).

2. This bread of life is symbolized
   (a) in the manna of the Old Testament, as Christ said himself;
   (b) in the bread given by the angel to Elias (3 Kings 19. 7).

3. It is the bread of life because, as St Thomas says, it produces all the spiritual effects which are usually produced by material food in the body:
   (a) it sustains it;
   (b) it increases it;
   (c) it repairs the damage done by our faults;
   (d) it refreshes us (3. q. 74. a. 1. c).

The Eucharist: a bread which transforms

1. *Transformation in Christ:*

(a) The fact of this transformation of ourselves into Christ: the difference between material and spiritual food:

i. material food produces its effects because we assimilate it into ourselves. It is converted into our very own life;

ii. in the case of spiritual food the opposite takes place; we are assimilated into it.

(b) The explanation of this:

St Thomas says: There is a great difference between spiritual and material food:

i. the material food is converted into the substance of him who is nourished by it; but spiritual food converts man into itself, as St Augustine says, hearing these words from the mouth of Christ: Neither will you change me into yourself as you do with your earthly food; but I will change you into myself (3. q. 63. a. 3 *ad* 3mm);

ii. in participating in the life of Christ we also share in all the riches of his heart; the merit of his prayer, his sacrifice, his

offering of himself in homage to the Eternal Father become, in some way, ours.

2. *Moral transformation:*

(a) If the Eucharist transforms us into Christ the whole of our moral life should also be transformed.

(b) To be a Christian is to be another Christ.

i. to reproduce in us the sentiments and virtues of Christ;

ii. think, love and act as he did;

iii. be humble, self-sacrificing, charitable, obedient, as he was.

If you did but know the gift of God

1. *Those who do not draw near:*

The Eucharist is despised by many; by others it is little known; there are many who, although they know about it, do not draw near to receive its benefits.

2. *Those who approach without the due dispositions:*

Others approach, but they do so without the due dispositions. It must be a very weak Christian who does not know how to feed himself with the bread which has come down from heaven.

3. *Those who approach out of routine:*

(a) If the one who does approach finds that his moral life is not changed, transformed into Christ, then we may have serious doubts about those communions, not that they are bad, but that they are made out of routine and therefore with little fruit.

(b) We must fly from these routine communions wffiich are made from other motives except the right one, i.e. from that of ostentation, vanity, etc.

4. *Those who make a pact with the world and with Christ:*

(a) there exists a certain false piety today which would like to unite communion and a worldly life;

(b) they are incompatible;

(c) for those who are well intentioned and who see themselves surrounded by the wrorld on all sides in the daily circumstances of their life, frequent communion is a good and efficacious means of protection;

(d) but for those who try to live a double life, divided into two watertight compartments, it will have little fruit and they should ask themselves if they have the right intention in communicating.

5. *Conclusion:*

(a) We should try to receive communion frequently (cf. St Thomas),

(b) but in the right dispositions; only then shall we receive the full fruit of it. If you did but know the gift of God. . . .

F: Easter Communion and frequent Communion

The obligation and the counsel

1. *The time of Lent:*

The Church now urges the fulfilment of the Paschal precept of receiving communion at least once a year.

2. *The Gospel of today, symbol of the Eucharist:*

(a) gives us an opportunity to treat of this obligation;

(b) and also of that of frequent communion, a counsel often repeated in the Church.

3. *Here we can compare two things:*

The abandonment of communion by many and the opposite extreme, frequent communion.

Communion in the history of the Church

I. *The necessity of Communion:*

(a) Christ affirms it repeatedly (John 6).

(b) It is also the general doctrine of the Fathers and the theologians (cf. St Thomas, p. 192).

2. *The ancient custom:*

(a) All those who had not been baptized were not allowed to communicate, on the contrary all the baptized were, even though they had not yet reached the age of reason (cf. *Ordo Romanus* I). Children were given communion after baptism (PL. 78. 957-958).

(b) Frequency of Communion:

i. in apostolic times all communicated whenever the Lord's Supper was celebrated;

ii. St Justin speaks of the communion taken by the deacons to those who were unable to be present.

(c) Abundant testimony of the Fathers:

i. Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria speak of daily communion as of a common practice.

ii. St John Chrysostom, complaining of those who only received communion at Easter, says: Why do you communicate only at Easter? For him who communicates it is always Easter.

3. *In the Middle Ages and in modern times:*

(a) In the mediaeval Church:

i. From the fifth century the custom of frequent communion begins to die out. The Councils remind the faithful of their obligation to receive communion at least several times a year.

ii. The Council of the Lateran commands at least Easter communion.

(b) In the modern Church:

i. After the Reformation some attempts were made to restore the practice of frequent communion, but they were frustrated in great part by Jansenism.

ii. At length St Pius X succeeded in bringing back the practice.

Communion necessary

1. *The Paschal Precept:*

The Church lays it down that:

(a) every member of the faithful of either sex must, after having reached the use of reason, receive the Holy Eucharist once a year, at least at Easter time;

(b) unless, for some reasonable cause and on the advice of his confessor, he judges that it is wise to abstain from it for a little while (cf. Code of Canon Law, can. 859).

2. *The dispositions:*

(a) For the soul:

A state of grace, which for those who have been guilty of a grave sin as yet unconfessed, implies confession.

(b) For the body:

The eucharistic fast:

i. no solid food for at least three hours before communion;

ii. no liquids (except water) for at least one hour before communion;

iii. all alcoholic drinks, three hours fast before communion;

iv. natural water does not break the fast;

v. where possible it is the mind of the Church that we should observe the full fast from midnight;

vi. those who are sick may take liquid foods (not alcoholic) before communion and medicines, even solid ones, at any time.

3. *Viaticum:*

(a) Communion is also necessary in danger of death; because when the body begins to break up then we must pay more attention to the things of the spirit.

(b) It is a grave obligation on the part of the relatives and others to advise the parish priest in case of danger of death to a member of the family.

(c) To deprive the sick person of this communion is a grave breach of charity, no matter what the motive may be. The Christian spirit is to advise the priest as soon as danger threatens, without thinking of human motives, such as what the feelings of the sick person are going to be, and so on. Instead we ought to remember that, through Viaticum, the sick person has received the pledge of eternal glory and future resurrection.

Frequent Communion

1. It is recommended by the Church (cf. can. 863).

2. Pope St. Pius X exhorts the faithful to frequent reception of it because:

(a) it brings about a closer union with Christ;
(b) gives rise to a more developed spiritual life;
(c) enriches the soul with an abundance of virtues;
(d) gives a more sure pledge of eternal happiness.

3. *He gives the following rules:*

(a) No one should be forbidden to receive communion frequently, even daily, if they approach this sacrament in a state of grace and with the right intention.

(b) This right intention means the exclusion of human motives such as vanity or mere routine or habit, and includes the positive intention of thanking God, by this communion, for all his benefits and asking him for all we need for soul and body.

(c) It is enough to be free from mortal sins, although it is to be desired that even venial sin will be excluded. We should also make due preparation and thanksgiving.

The Eucharist and life

1. The Christian life is not something which has isolated compartments.

2. Instead there are many links in it which go to make up one chain.

3. The idea is to sanctify the whole by means *of* this Sacrament of union with Christ, so that our religion will be a thing which runs through the whole of our daily life.

G: The Eucharist and sin

A relic of Jansenism

It is not altogether a rare thing to come across souls who keep away from this Sacrament for fear of receiving Christ in unworthy dispositions. They seem to think in practice, if not in theory, that venial sins and imperfections are incompatible with its reception. For that reason it is useful to deal, from time to time, with the relation between the Eucharist and sin.

Mortal sin and the Eucharist

It is forbidden to communicate in mortal sin. St Paul makes this clear: Therefore, if anyone eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily, he will be held to account for the Lord's body and blood (1 Cor. 11. 27).

The theological explanation:

(a) He who receives communion, by the mere fact of doing so, professes that he is in union with Christ and incorporated into his body. 'This is done by living faith, which no one has who is in mortal sin. Therefore it is manifest that whoever receives this sacrament while in mortal sin, is guilty of lying to this sacrament, and consequently of sacrilege, because he profanes the sacrament: and therefore he sins mortally' (St Thomas, 3. q. 80. a. 4. c).

(b) He who is in mortal sin is spiritually dead and therefore cannot take in spiritual food, proper only to those w'ho are spiritually alive (3. q. 79. a. 3).

(c) Therefore previous confession is necessary and an act of contrition is not sufficient, ordinarily speaking.

The Eucharist: antidote for mortal sin

1. It can be so considered because of the effects which it produces (cf. St. Thomas, p. 193).

(a) on the one hand it increases charity,

(b) it diminishes the fire of concupiscence,

(c) it strengthens the soul against temptations.

2. *Bd John of Avila says:*

(a) It is a remedy against sin:

'A great evil has come upon the Church for not having taught this doctrine more constantly; i.e. that the reception of this holy food is a most efficacious remedy for not falling into mortal sin.'

(b) Preserves us from sin:

'I give you time as a witness that, if you neglect to eat this food of life you will soon find that you have to accuse yourself of mortal sin. . . . Many have committed mortal sins who, if they had confessed and received communion a little before the temptation, would not have fallen into the abyss of mortal sin.'

Venial sins and the Eucharist

Doctrine of St Pius X: It is enough, in order to receive communion, to be free from mortal sin and to have a firm purpose of not sinning again. According to this doctrine:

(a) there is no sin or bad communion when we receive our Lord with venial sin on the soul;

(b) it is convenient however to get rid of them, and this the communion itself does (cf. St Thomas, p. 193).

The Eucharist: medicine against venial sin

I. We refer here to deliberate and indeliberate venial sins and also to deliberate imperfection.

2. We are speaking of good souls who have a sincere desire to advance in the spiritual life. For all these St Thomas has a most consoling doctrine:

(a) According to his teaching the Eucharist pardons venial sins because it is a spiritual food. Each day something is lost, spiritually, which has to be made up; this loss being due to the loss of fervour of charity through venial sins.

(b) Since charity is directly increased by the Eucharist it follows that it also removes venial sin from the soul. As St Augustine says: This daily bread is eaten against the daily weaknesses.

A food: not a reward

1. *An erroneous judgement on this point:*

There are souls who seem to think that communion is a privilege reserved for the perfect. The least fault, even involuntary' ones, cause them to stay away from communion.

2. *The truth is:*

Communion is not a reward but a food. Even though we had the purity of an angel and the sanctity' of John the Baptist we would never be worthy to receive or to handle this sacrament.

3. *The practical attitude:*

(a) We are unworthy: **but. ..**

i. Christ, in his mercy, wants us to receive him, but as a food—my flesh is real food (John 6).

ii. Therefore, in spite of our weaknesses and imperfection—perhaps it would be better to sayr because of them—we ought to receive him frequently. He who feels weak seeks food more eagerly than one who feels strong.

(b) The Eucharist is a remedy:

i. Souls sometimes torture themselves to find the remedy for their imperfections. This is too weak and human a remedy.

ii. Let them go to Christ; he is the life and has come that we may have life: He who eats me will live, in his turn, by me (John 6).

The great disposition

The way to get the most fruit out of our communions is reduced to a double virtue; humility and generosity. Humility by which we confess our lack of confidence in Christ. We must be generous in our prayer, in our sacrifices and in our service of our Lord. Then we can receive him with complete confidence and allow him to do the rest.

H: Jesus escapes into the mountains

1. *A surprise and its lesson:*

The attitude of Jesus must have come as a great surprise to the crowd on this occasion.

(a) The people have followed Christ into the desert with confidence, knowing that by doing so they may well incur the anger of their spiritual rulers. However, they had the wrong idea of the Messianic promises. All day long they had heard him talk about the kingdom, and now they listen to the promptings of their hearts and want to make him a king in very deed.

(b) The people, impressed too much by the miracle, had the wrong picture of the Messias. They thought of him as one who could exterminate their enemies like Isaias; cover a whole region with darkness as did Moses; cross rivers dry-shod, like Josue. In a very short time such a one could bring their great dream to life, making a great and glorious kingdom of Israel.

2. *The attitude of Christ:*

Foreseeing the attitude of the crowd, Jesus escapes into the mountain.

(a) Through prudence:

He could not give them an occasion to proclaim him king, because that would have produced an act of sedition in Israel.

(b) Because of his religious mission:

He had come to give testimony of the truth and therefore to rid them of their false ideas about the Messias. His kingdom would be that one which he preached in the sermon on the mount;

i. in poverty, praised beyond riches;

ii. one in which it would be necessary to give up worldly riches and honours;

iii. one which would be, in every sense, a spiritual kingdom, by faith and charity, in the hearts of men.

(c) Herod could rest quietly on his throne, because here was a king who came with no desire to depose others.

(d) Christ here gives us a great example of humility:

i. He had given the people what he had; bread for their souls and their bodies.

ii. When it appears only right that he should receive a reward he flees from it and from the applause of the crowd.

iii. As he had used his omnipotence to work the miracle, now he uses his infinite wisdom to read their hearts and prevent them from making a great mistake.

(e) Two distinct attitudes, both an example:

i. The first is the one presented for us in today's Gospel, by which Christ shows us that this is not the way to reach the true Christian triumph.

ii. The second is in the Garden when, after the agony, Christ goes forth of his own will to meet another crowd, this time coming with a very different purpose. Then he gave himself up

voluntarily to those who had come to lead him to his throne on the cross.

iii. It was in this second scene that we see the Christian spirit and it is through this kingship that Christ was given 'That name which is greater than any other name; so that everything in heaven and on earth and under the earth, must bend the knee before the name of Jesus.'

I: Popularity: true and false

The example of today's Gospel

On all that he did and touched our Lord impressed the seal of his divinity. Today he gives us an example of the most perfect self-control face to face with the mad enthusiasm of the people. It is an example for priests and for all who have to govern others.

The example of Christ

1. *He leaves his solitude:*

His intention was to find a quiet place where he and his disciples could rest; but he was followed by the crowd and he took pity on their needs, spiritual first, and then material. He spent a long time:

(a) curing the sick,

(b) preaching to all the kingdom of God,

(c) giving them food for their bodies, in the miraculous multiplication of the loaves.

2. *Christ returns to his solitude:*

He has not changed his mind; once his mission among these people is finished he returns to the solitude he had been seeking when he saw them first. There he would find the time to pray to his Father in peace, and there he would avoid the dangers of the badly directed enthusiasm of the crowd, who had been too much impressed by the merely material side of the great miracle he had done. Their idea now was to raise him up as a political leader, and he would have none of it.

Harmful popularity

1. There is a popularity which is altogether harmful:

(a) that which is bom of approbation and favour dispensed at the command of the lower instincts;

(b) it is not true popularity;

(c) it has for its time limit that of the duration of the lower appetites.

2. There is another which disguises itself under better colours but is equally harmful;

(a) it is that proper to those who have the government of the people either in the spiritual, political or social orders;

(b) this is harmful when:

i. it gives rise to pride in those who receive it;

ii. it robs God of the glory due to him; especially the priest must remember that example of the Baptist: he must increase while I must decrease,

iii. when it distorts values, making popularity itself the reason for action, or when it uses the people for one's own ends.

(c) such popularity is:

i. egoistic;

ii. makes a man useless, robbing him of his strength;

iii. degrades him easily;

iv. blinds a man to such a point that he begins to think every means lawful which will increase his popularity with the people.

True popularity

1. Is that which is acquired as Christ's was:

(a) curing, teaching, obtaining for the people material and spiritual benefits;

(b) this is the real way to carry the crowd with us.

2. It is that which comes from sincere gratitude for benefits received; above all for the benefit of a life-time of consecration to God's service and the well-being of others. It is the popularity of the Apostles and of the saints.

3. Job gives us a summary of the reasons for it and of the true popularity, which he also received:

> None heard the fame of me then, but called me a happy man; none watched my doings then, but spoke my praise. Poor man nor helpless orphan cried to me in vain; I was the welcome refuge of the doomed, the solace of the widow. Dutiful observance was still the vesture I wore, my robe and crown integrity; in me the blind found sight, the lame strength, the poor a father. None so ready to give the stranger's cause a hearing, break open the fangs of the wrong-doer and snatch the prey from his teeth (Job 29. 11-17).

Passion Sunday

THE PHARISEES ACCUSE CHRIST

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: Hebrews 9. 11-15. Gospel John 8. 46-59.

Texts which refer to anger and meekness

1. *Dangers of anger:*

This impatience of thine is a great murderer of fools; in their simplicity of heart, they repine at the injury, to their ruin. Job 5. 2.

Fools betray anger on the instant, when prudence would pass the insult by. Prov. 12. 16.

Any brawler can provoke a quarrel; it takes a patient man to lay it by. Prov. 15. 18.

He loves a feud that loves contention; build high and court thy ruin. Prov. 17. 19.

He injures himself, that is ungovernable in rage; every advantage he takes does but injure him the more. Prov. 19. 19.

What is more crushing than stone, more burdensome than sand? A fool's ill humour. Fierce, fierce, is rage, and indignation mounts like a flood but the pangs of jealousy, these there is no resisting. Prov. 27. 3-4.

Ever the quarreller breeds strife; quick temper is ever a fault. Prov. 29. 22.

Never be quick to take offence; it is a fool's heart that harbours grudges. Eccles. 7. 10.

A woman's ill will changes the very look of her; grim as a bear's her visage, and she goes like one mourning. Ecclus. 25. 24.

Look to thy last end, and leave thy quarrelling. Ecclus. 28. 6.

Spark blown upon will blaze, spat upon will die out; see how of both the mouth is arbiter. Ecclus. 28. 14.

Jealousy and peevishness shorten a man's days; cares bring old age untimely. Ecclus. 30. 26.

But I tell you that any man who is angry with his brother must answer for it before the court of justice, and any man who says Raca to his brother must answer for it before the Council; and any man who says to his brother, Thou fool, must answer for it in hell fire. Matt. 5. 22.

Idolatry, witchcraft, feuds, quarrels, jealousies, outbursts of anger, rivalries, dissensions, factions, spite, murder, drunkenness and debauchery. I warn you, as I have warned you before, that

those who live in such a way will not inherit God's kingdom. Gal. 5. 20-21.

Do nor let resentment lead you into sin; the sunset must not find you still angry. Eph. 4. 26.

Now it is your turn to have done with it all, resentment, anger, spite, insults. . . . Col. 3. 8.

A bishop, after all, since he is the steward of God's house . . . must not be an obstinate or quarrelsome man. . . . Titus 1. 7.

It is for us men to be ready listeners, slow to speak our minds, slow to take offence; man's anger does not bear the fruit which is acceptable to God. Rid yourselves, then, of all defilement, of all the ill will that remains in you; be patient. . . . James 1. 19-21.

2. *God's patience:*

Thus the Lord passed by, and he cried out, It is the Lord God, the ruler of all things, the merciful, the gracious; slow to take vengeance, rich in kindness, faithful to his promises. Ex. 34. 6.

But thou, Lord, art a God of mercy and pity, patient, full of compassion true to thy promise. Ps. 85. 15.

How gracious the Lord is, how merciful, how patient, how rich in pity! Ps. 144. 8.

And yet, though the sinner presume on the divine patience that has borne with a hundred misdeeds, I know well enough that blessings are for those who fear God, who fear his vengeance. Eccles. 8. 12.

For us, thou art God; thou, beneficent and truthful, thou, always patient and merciful towards the world thou governest. Wis. 15. 1.

Or is it that thou art presuming on that abundant kindness of his, which bears with thee and waits for thee ?... Rom. 2. 4.

And yet I was pardoned, so that in me first of all Christ Jesus might give the extreme example of his patience; I was to be the pattern of all those who will ever believe in him, to win eternal life, i Tim. i. 16.

3. *The divine anger:*

Fiercely the Lord's anger burns against us, that the words of this book should have fallen on deaf ears. ... 4 Kings 22. 13.

Who can resist thee, so terrible, so sudden in thy anger ? Ps. 75. 8.

God's anger against them reached its height, and slew their lordliest, brought them low, all the flower of Israel. Ps. 77. 31.

Lord, wilt thou always turn thy face away so obdurately, will the flame of thy anger never be quenched ? Ps. 88. 47.

That is why the Lord's anger against his people has been so fierce; that is why his hand has been raised to smite them, so that the mountains trembled at it, and corpses lay unregarded like dung in the streets. But even so his anger is not yet appeased, his hand threatens us still. Isaias 5. 25.

Yes, the day of the Lord is coming, pitiless, full of vengeance and bitter retribution, ready to turn earth into a wilderness, ridding it of its sinful brood. Isaias 13. 9. Cf. Ez. 7. 12.

But wilt thou let thy indignant anger fall on Jerusalem, on that holy mountain of thine? . . . Dan. 9. 16.

Day of vengeance, day of strain and stress, day of ransack and ruin; dim and dark, overcast with cloud and storm! Soph. 1. 15.

Many of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees came to his baptizing; and when he saw these, he asked them, Who was it that taught you, brood of vipers, to flee from the vengeance that draws near? Matt. 3.7.

God's anger is being revealed from heaven; his anger against the impiety and wrong-doing of men, whose wrong doing denies his truth its full scope. Rom. 1. 18.

These are what brings down God's vengeance on the unbelievers. Col. 3. 6.

They must always be filling up the measure of their sins, and now it is God's final vengeance that has fallen upon them. 1 Thess. 2.16.

But now the day of the retribution has come; the time when thou wilt judge the dead, rewarding thy sen ants . . . and destroying the corrupters of the world. Apoc. 11. 18.

And I heard a loud voice coming from the shrine, that said to the seven angels, Go and pour out the seven cups of God's vengeance on the earth. Apoc. 16. 1.

4. *We must be patient in tribulations:*

Naked I came, said he, when I left my mother's womb, and whence I came, naked I must go. The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. Job 1. 21.

My son, do not undervalue the correction the Lord sends thee, do not be unmanned when he reproves thy faults. Prov. 3. 11.

Patience comes of sovereign prudence, impatience of unchecked folly. Prov. 14. 29.

A gentle answer is a quarrel averted; a wOrd that gives pain does but fan the flame of resentment. Prov. 15. 1.

Patience is worth more than valour; better a disciplined heart than a stormed city. Prov. 16. 32.

Accept all that comes to thee, patient in sorrow, humiliation long enduring; for gold and silver the crucible, it is in the furnace of humiliation men shew themselves worthy of his acceptance. Ecclus. 2. 4-5.

As God's ministers we must do everything to make ourselves acceptable. We have to show great patience, in times of affliction, of need, of difficulty. 2 Cor. 6. 4. Cf. Rom. 12. 12; 2 Peter 1. 6.

5. *The virtue of meekness:*

Patience bides her time, and with time content comes back to her. Ecclus. 1. 29.

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Blessed are the patient; they shall inherit the land. Matt. 5. 4.

Take my yoke upon yourselves, and learn from me; I am gentle and humble of heart. Matt. 11. 29.

Kindness, generosity, forbearance, gentleness. ... No law can touch lives such as these. Gal. 5. 22-3.

You must be always humble, always gentle; patient too, in bearing with one another's faults. . . . Eph. 4. 2.

The livery you wear must be tender compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Col. 3. 12. Cf. Titus 3. 2; 2 Tim. 2. 25.

SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LITURGICAL

Apart from the comments necessary to explain the liturgy of Passion Sunday we shall also make mention here of the general characteristic of the time between now and Easter Sunday.

A: Passiontidc

During these next two weeks the central theme of the Church's liturgy is the Cross, as we can see from a glance at the Preface of the Masses and the breviary hymns. The lessons of the office are taken from the prophet Jeremias, a type of the patient, suffering Christ. However, we should be careful to notice that the Church presents the Passion and Cross of Christ together with the thought of the victory gained in the Resurrection—and here is a difference between the ancient and modern piety. There is a danger that modern piety may be almost sentimental; whereas the ancient Church was more interested in the reality gained by the passion and death of Christ than in the sufferings on the Cross. This also accounts for the terms used in the Liturgy, terms in which the Church almost seems to rejoice in the Cross. The Preface of the Mass also reveals this same idea: You placed the salvation of the world on the wood of the cross, that from the very place whence death came, life should also arise, and that he who won a victory through a tree should be overcome through a tree as well.

Because she wishes to remind us of the Passion the Church is more austere in her external liturgical symbols. The *Gloria* is omitted in the *Introit* and *Lavabo}* the opening psalm is not said at the foot of the altar. The cross and the statues are all covered over with purple veils in sign of mourning and also to prevent our being distracted by anything and to enable us to fix our whole mind on the cross. However, we notice that the cross also is covered, probably because, in the old days, it was usually a very rich piece of work, adorned with jewels; therefore at Passiontide it was covered to prevent distraction coming from its very richness.

B: The Mass of Passion Sunday

The Mass of today is celebrated in the Basilica of St Peter, once the ordination vigil is over. It is one of the most beautiful in the Roman Antiphonary and also rich in sentiments (Schuster, *Liber Sac.* tome 8, p. 146). The predominating note is remembrance of the Passion. The chants of the *Introit,* Gradual, Tract and Offertory are all taken from the Messianic psalms and put in the mouth of Christ; all refer to the drama of the Passion. The Liturgy imagines Christ surrounded by his enemies clamouring for his condemnation; while the Father is demanding suitable satisfaction for the sins of the world. Christ calls on his Father to defend his cause against his enemies. The Epistle gives us the result of this struggle; Christ is received into heaven as the Redeemer and High Priest of the New Covenant. Here we see once again the objective view of the Passion which was so common to the ancient Church.

II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

A: The Epistle: Hebrews 9: 11-15

I. *Occasion and argument:*

Frequently we come across certain passages in St Paul's writings which are so rich in theological sentiments that they extend beyond such a commentary as this. Such is the passage read in today's Mass. St Paul, fleeing from Rome shortly after the burning of the city, writes to a Jewish community now turned Christian, the epistle which bears the title Hebrews. So far as their place of residence is concerned it would seem to be Jerusalem, because the letter takes for granted a deep knowledge of the Law and also of the Temple ceremonies which seem to point to that fervent Christian community which was organized very much on the lines of another synagogue in the city of Jerusalem.

These converts from Judaism lived in hope of the moment when the full mosaic law would take the place of that of the Judaism they had known; meanwhile they assisted at the Temple ceremonies. Did they not still live in what had once been the city and the Temple of God?

Who knows but that they became too Jewish in their outlook and if some were not on the point of becoming apostates as Chapter 6 seems to imply. Perhaps also, as Ricciotti points out, they had become a little discouraged at the thought of the destruction of that fair city, which destruction was obviously near at hand. In such a case, what would happen to their dearest hopes, because then Jerusalem would never be the centre of the Christian world?

To preach the doctrine of penance to them would be useless, because it was too well known to them (Heb. 6. 3 ff.); therefore St Paul decided to preach to them something much more perfect.

This more perfect doctrine is that of the priesthood of Christ. All the Temple rites and priesthood with which they were so familiar were only so many types or figures of the eternal priesthood of Christ. If then, he says to them, you should be on the point of going back to that which you had before and which you miss so much, stop when you remember that you are going back to a vacuum. If you are dismayed at the thought of the destruction of all this, know that there is a new temple and a new priesthood which is due to take the place of it all. This is now finished, and the priesthood of Christ has taken its {dace. What docs it matter if the figure disappears so long as the reality has taken its place? This is the argument of the whole Epistle and the little piece read today is composed of a few lines in which the high priesthood of the Jews is compared with the perfect priesthood of Christ. The theme is so rich in meaning and also so opportune that we shall deal with only a part of it here, leaving the rest to other occasions when we shall have to go into more details about the sacrifice and the priesthood of Christ.

2. *The texts:*

(a) Meanwhile Christ. . . our High Priest. . .

After having given a description of the old priesthood, St Paul now begins to compare it to that of Christ. He makes clear the superiority of the latter's priesthood by the same means, i.e. by dealing with the five points on which he has already dwelt: (i) who enters; (ii) the dignity/ of the temple into which he enters; (iii) how does he enter; (iv) when? (v) for what purpose?

(b) Who enters? Christ, the High Priest:

If the priest is essentially a mediator between God and man, then Christ must be the high Priest, since the union in him of the two natures in one person make him the link between God and man.

If, on the other hand, the priesthood implies the representation of the people for whom sacrifice is offered, then Christ, who is the natural representative of men, is also a High Priest. If, finally, for the Priesthood, nothing is so essential as to have a vocation, Christ is again our High Priest, because he had received no other mandate from his Father except that of offering himself for us all. The proof of this is the prayer he sent up to his Father as soon as he was conceived in his Mother's womb (Heb. 10. 4 ff). A priest anointed, not with oil, but with the very divinity itself. A priest of the good things to come, i.e. the promises made of old to Abraham, superior to anything ever achieved by the Jewish nation even in times of its greatest prosperity.

(c) Where does he enter?

Into a tabernacle greater and more perfect, not made by man's hands.

We must not take these words too literally, as if Christ did not die on the Cross but in heaven. St. Paul, looking at the Cross, imagines Christ entering heaven as the high priest entered the Holy of Holies, to present to the Father the merits of the sacrifice of Calvar)·. There was no need, in this case, to reserve some small spot on the earth's surface where God could be supposed to dwell, because Christ, in the union of the two natures, had the divinity, as it were, with him all the time.

(d) How does he enter?

With his own blood and not with that of he-goats or calves. Notice, not merely the natural difference between the two types of blood, but the symbolic character of the animals' blood which is not capable of having any other value than that of a figure which represents the inner feelings of those who offer it. This is compared with that of Christ, the blood of God made Man, offered to God under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

In the Old Testament the rites and sacrifices are all blood-offerings. If it is true that God and Moses did no more than use the cultural values known to the people, it is also true that this shedding of blood had a double significance. In the expiatory sacrifices there was a symbolic substitution of the animal for the guilty man; while in the sacrifices of adoration, there was the wish to offer one's own life to God, whether it be the life of the individual or the collective life of the people. God used this idea to prefigure the death of Christ. Both Testaments were signed in blood, that of the Old Law with blood of no real value; that of the New with the blood of Christ himself, of infinite merit.

(e) When?

Once and for all time.

Later (w. 25-28) St Paul will explain how it was that the High Priest had to enter into the Holy of Holies every year to renew the sacrifice, while in the case of Christ, it was sufficient for him to offer his once only. Then, in Chapter 10 he will give us the reason: that sins should be taken away by the blood of bulls and of goats is impossible. There is a double reason for this, namely, because the value of any sacrifice depends on the victim and the purity of the will of the one who offers it. Since both are creatures, the value of the Old Law sacrifices will always be finite. If we add to this the fact that there were often defects in the victims and that the sanctity of the priests left much to be desired, then is it not logical that the Lord, like Malachy, will say: Thou didst not demand victim or offering, the burnt sacrifice, the sacrifice for sin, nor hast thou found any pleasure in them (Heb. 10. 8).

On the other hand, Christ, with his sacred Body which receives dignity and value from the divine Person, can say: See, my God, I

am coming to do thy will. . . . In accordance with this divine will we have been sanctified by an offering made once for all, the body of Jesus Christ (Heb. 10. 9-10).

St Paul, in a few words, describes for us all the sacrificial elements and the infinite effect of that of Christ: we have the priest who offers, the victim 'the body with which thou hast endowed me' (Hcb. 10. 5); the divine acceptance; the satisfactory character of the sacrifice: I will not remember their sins any more (Heb. 17); and its definitive effect, which will be explained later.

(f) For what purpose?

For eternal redemption. The Jewish sacrifices only gave a sacrificial and external purity. That of Christ gives more; it redeems in the true sense of the word.

(g) The blood of bulls and goats . . .

It has already been explained. All those sprinklings of blood and ashes sanctified *the flesh·,* i.e. with a holiness which was purely legal and external; the blood of Christ frees us from sin internally, in conscience.

(h) For this reason he is a mediator:

The deep sense of this verse is plain. It is better explained by the verses that follow than by those which go before it. However, its connection with the death of Christ makes it very valuable here.

The efficacy of the passion and death of Christ lead us naturally to a consideration of his role as mediator. Here we shall content ourselves with two remarks; the first, that the phrase 'to atone all our transgressions under the Old covenant' does not limit the extent of the redemption since other phrases of St Paul make it clear that it is universal. The idea in this phrase is that the transgressions of the Old Law obtained their forgiveness through Christ alone—no other means was efficacious. Again; the phrase 'the destined heirs' does not restrict the universal salvific will of God, even though it does imply the tremendous mystery of predestination.

3. *Applications:*

(a) Christ, our priest. What thanks we owe to him! The first effect of his sacrifice—and let us never forget that it was his life which he sacrificed—is to free us from sin and its consequences. Shall we never learn, through seeing him changed so into the Man of Sorrows, what sin really means? From slavery he brought us to the adopted sonship of God; let us take advantage of it.

(b) Apart from its satisfactory value, his sacrifice was an act of worship of infinite value. It is a model of reverence.

(c) He also opened for us the flood gates of God's treasure house; those graces abound now, after his death.

(d) Today, in heaven, he continues to present to God the infinite merits of his passion, as a priest always making intercession for us, above all during the sacrifice of the Mass. Let us make use of the Mass as we should.

B: The Gospel: John 8. 46-59

1. *Historical situation and argument:*

The autumn had come and with it the time for celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles, a joyful occasion like all those connected with the vine harvest. The people, in memory of their sojourn in the desert, lived in tents made of branches. There were processions to the Temple with branches of palm, olive and willow; fruits were carried, and there was a solemn religious dance by torch light in the Temple court. Every morning water was brought in solemn procession from the pool of Siloe to the Temple. Christ used all these elements of the Feast for his preaching. Amid the gleam of the torches Jesus says to his hearers: I am the light of the world, . . . he who follows me can never walk in darkness; he will possess the light which is life (John 8. 12). One morning he assists at the procession in which the water was carried, and this time he says: If any man is thirsty, let him come to me, and drink (John 7. 37). At the end of each of his proclamations there is an argument with his enemies.

The festivities lasted for eight days, but at the beginning Jesus was not present and Jerusalem rang with the comments; although for fear of the Jews nobody dared to speak of him openly (John 7. 13). As soon as he appeared the crowds gathered about him, and face to face with his burning words there were some who said: How does this man know how to read? He has never studied (John 7. 13). It is an occasion, and Jesus makes use of it to announce his Trinitarian doctrine: The learning which I impart is not my own, it comes from him who sent me (John 7. 16).

Others have another objection. The Messias was supposed to appear suddenly and unexpectedly; but all knew whence this man was. Jesus cries out yet again: You know me and you know whence I come; but I have not come on my own errand, I was sent by one who has a right to send; and him you do not know. ... I know him, because I come from him; it was he who sent me (John 7. 27-29). They could not tolerate such open defiance: And now they were ready to seize him; but none of them laid hands on him; his time had not yet come (John 7. 30). The common people, however, said: Can the Christ be expected to do more miracles at his coming than this man has done? Then the Scribes and Pharisees, mingled among the crowd, could not stand it any longer. They went to the chief priests and ancients who sent guards to arrest him; but they returned empty handed, such was his eloquence. Why have you

not brought him here? The officers answered: Nobody has ever spoken as this man speaks (John 7. 46).

It is not easy to see the exact place in the eight days which each of the incidents which followed occupied; it is enough for us to know that they took place sometime during those eight days, in which many things happened, including the attempt to trap our Lord by means of the woman taken in adultery. One of these episodes is that chosen for today's Gospel. Jesus addressed himself to a group of those Jews who believed in him, telling them that, if they persevere in the faith, the truth will make them free. What? roar his adversaries; and we—the children of God and of Abraham—are we not then free?

If you were indeed children of God and of Abraham then you would imitate their works, replies Christ. If you w'ere children of God, you would welcome me gladly; it was from God I took my origin, from him I have come (John 8. 42). Each one is a son of him whose works he imitates, says the Jewish proverb, and you imitate the deeds of Satan, who is a liar and the father of lies. Why is it that you do not believe me when I tell you the truth? (John 8. 46).

The discussion continues for a long time, and the repeated affirmations of his divinity annoy the Scribes and Pharisees so much that, in the end, they take up stones to kill him. Jesus once again escapes from their hands and goes away. He does not leave Judaea, however, but remains there for about two and a half months, returning on the occasion of yet another feast day to Jerusalem, but there is little he can do there. All those who follow him have now been excommunicated (John 9. 22), and his preaching falls on deaf ears. There is another violent scene recorded for us by St John. If thou are the Christ, tell us so openly.

I have told you, but you will not believe me, our Lord replied. I will now add only one thing more, that no one can take away a single one of the sheep the Father has given into my hands. No one can tear them away from the hand of my Father. My Father and I are one (John 10. 30).

Once again they take up stones to kill him, but again Jesus escapes and leaves the city. They will not see him again until Palm Sunday.

2. *The texts:*

The sermons and discussions of the Lord as they are recorded for us in the 8th Chapter of St John, fall into three sections, although it is hard to determine if they are three separate incidents or three parts of one and the same discussion. The piece chosen for today's liturgy is part of the third section of this long discussion, provoked by the phrase in which Christ promised liberty to those who admit the truth. It can be divided into three parts. The first begins at verse 46 and contains the meek reply of Christ to the

accusation that he was a Samaritan and had a devil. In the second part his adversaries are furious at him for promising eternal life (w. 52-56); and at the continued references to Abraham, who he says was full of joy at seeing his day. They taunt him with the impossibility of such a thing being true. How could one as yet a young man, justly claim to have existed at the same time as the Patriarch? This is the third part of the discussion and the end of the section chosen for today's Gospel.

(a) Can any of you convict me of sin?

A bold challenge, and one which could only have been hurled at his adversaries by one like Christ, sanctity itself because of the union with the godhead in the Person of the Son of God, who would have been responsible for any fault committed by either of his natures. His prudence must have been extraordinary, too, otherwise he would not have been able to make such a challenge.

Sanctity' is proper to the Lamb of God who came to remove the world's sin; indeed, we may well say that it is distinctive of him in the New Testament. He is described as being like to us in all things, save only sin (Heb. 4. 15); in him there is no sin or deception (1 Peter 2. 22); his very cleanliness from sin makes him a worthy High Priest (Heb. 7. 26).

It is worthy of note that Jesus, the most humble of men, knows how to bring before the hearts and minds of men their own sinfulness. But he never includes himself among the number of the sinners, nor does he propose himself to us as a model of repentance as he did in the case of other virtues.

Here are two practical applications:

i. *for the apostle.* If your life were such that you could repeat this challenge of the Master. . . .

i. *for the Christian.* Christ without sin is the model for the man of Christ. But how are we to avoid those daily falls? St Augustine gives us the answer. There is one virtue which covers all our defects before God and men—charity.

(b) Why is it that you do not believe me when I tell you the truth?

It is the conclusion from what has just been said. If you have nothing against me you must also admit that I have told the truth. Then, why do you not believe me? In another part of this work (19th Sunday after Pent, and Sexag. Sunday) we shall explain the reasons which blind the mind to truth. Now we may listen to the Lord, who puts all those reasons into one telling phrase.

(c) The man who belongs to God listens to God's words:

This can be — and in fact is, in many of the Fathers of the Church —the central theme for today's sermon. St Augustine sees here,

in these words, thc mystery of predestination, hut it would appear that the idea in Christ's mind was something more simple and depends on what has gone before in the previous verses. The sons of the devil arc those who prefer lies to truth; while the sons of God are those who prefer the truth to lies. Who are thc sons of the devil? According to Christ, those who wish to do his will. Who, then, are the children of God? Those who wish to do the will of God. We are left with this idea, that the desire to serve God is the best of all preparations for hearing his word and that the most sure sign that we are God's sons is an examination of conscience to see if we hear his words and keep them (cf. St Gregory the Great, Sect. III).

(d) We are right, surely, in saying that thou art a Samaritan and art possessed?

Before going any further, notice the attitude of the Pharisees and their way of acting. We shall see then why it is that the Fathers of the Church use this Gospel to preach on patience and anger. Our Lord reasons with them, but the Jews return insults only. They give him no answer to his challenge, they cite no sin of his; with a couple of insults they end the matter.

i. *Samaritan.* These were not of Jewish origin, but came from several regions conquered by the Assyrians, who brought many of them to Samaria in pursuit of their policy of overcoming nations by removing the inhabitants from one place to another. These people, still retaining much of their Gentile mentality, began to worship the God of Israel, but without giving up their own false gods. They had even built a temple near Jerusalem on Mt Garizim.

As time went on their religious ideas became more and more purified, so much so that, by the time Christ came, they were almost identified with those of the Jews, except in so far as they did not admit any sacred books posterior to the Captivity, and above all the fact that they had their own temple. The Jews had nothing but hatred for these people whom they considered heretics or at least schismatics, strangers, who had done all they could at the time to prevent the re-building of the Holy City. When the Jews went through their territory to Jerusalem they would not even speak to the Samaritans. Remember how surprised the Samaritan woman was when Christ spoke to her, and the question she asked him about where God should be adored (John 4).

ii. *Possessed by the devil.* They had made this accusation many times, and the insult it implies contrasts with the meekness and patience of the Saviour on this occasion.

(e) I am not possessed:

He leaves on one side the accusation that he is a Samaritan. To him for whom all people and races are equal it was less of an insult

than this charge of having a devil within him, no matter what they might think. They were well aware, of course, that our Lord was from Galilee. Christ simply denies that he has a devil, but he does so with patience and without anger (cf. Gregory the Great and Augustine in Sect. HI). The meaning of his answer is, You can see nothing in my way of acting which suggests that 1 have a devil within me. I seek only my Father's glory, not my own, and that is not the devil's way of working. W hen you insult me in this way you hurl at me an accusation which has nothing to support it. That does not matter to me; God will look after my glory.

Here, in a few words, is the programme for the apostle of Christ. Not to see anything except God's glory and when he is insulted and calumniated—as he will be, for the disciple is not above his master—then let him entrust his defence to the Father. Christ sought only one glory, that of heaven, not that of men. What is more, Christ, to whom all power of judgement had been given, does not wash to submit to his own judgement this right to honour. Truly, the destruction of Jerusalem is a good enough proof that there is another who will look to it and be the judge (John 8. 50).

(f) If a man is true to my word, to all eternity he will never see death:

He who keeps the word of God, that is, fulfils it to the letter, shall have eternal life for his body as well as for his soul. He who does not keep the word of God will rise again, because Christ gained this privilege for all men, but his resurrection will not be to life, but to death, according to the phrase used by St John.

(g) Art thou greater than our father, Abraham ?

As usual, Christ talks to them in heavenly terms and they draw the conversation back to earth again. *The Jews* for St John, mean always those of Jerusalem, and usually the spiritual leaders of the people. In this case they understood that Christ was promising eternal life; but all the prophets were dead, and dare he promise life eternal? And what of Abraham? and to a Jew the mention of Abraham finished the question. He must be mad!

(h) If I should speak in my own honour . . .

Our Lord refuses to enter into comparisons, although soon afterwards he clearly establishes his superiority over Abraham. It is enough at the moment for him to point out that he is not giving honour to himself; it is the Father on whom he relies and they could have heard that same testimony near the Jordan on the occasion of his baptism had they chosen to listen to it. The works of the Father accompanied Christ wherever he went; since what he does the Father also does (John 5. 19).

This was the second time that Jesus made use of this line of argument (cf. John 5. 31), in accordance with the Proverb: Seek praise, but not of thy own bestowing; another's lips, not thine, must sound it (Prov. 27, 2); even though, in this case, he is of the same substance as the Father.

Honour must come to me from my Father, from him whom you claim as your God; although you cannot recognize him. But I have knowledge of him; if I should say I have not, I should be what you are, a liar. Yes, I have knowledge of him, and I am true to his word (John 8. 54-55). From a simple study of this verse taken out of its context, and especially without taking into consideration St John's style, it might be difficult to prove from it the mutual divine knowledge of one another in the Father and the Son, but the whole of our Lord's argument is certainly directed to that claim of divinity, as the subsequent verses show.

(i) For your father Abraham, his heart was proud to see the day of my coming:

It is the first step towards the demonstration that he is superior to Abraham and then towards the proof that he is the Messias. There is no question here of a special vision, but simply of the promise that was made to Abraham (Gen. 12. 3), and the day to which our Lord refers takes in the whole of his manifestation of himself to the world (Luke 17. 22). When did he actually see it? By a vision in limbo or by faith? We do not know.

(j) Thou who art not yet fifty years old?

They continue right down to earth. It is not that they do not understand, because the stones they will pick up in a moment or two show that they do. It is just that they do not want to understand.

The number fifty means nothing—they merely chose a round number. Our Lord's age at this time, according to modern methods of calculating it, would be about thirty-seven, since St Luke's thirty which he gives at the beginning of our Lord's public life is also merely an approximate estimate.

(k) Before Abraham ever came to be, I am:

This is the definitive claim, and it is so simple that there is little need to examine it further, beyond pointing out the use of the tenses and comparing them here with those in Exodus 3. 14: I am the God who IS; thou shalt tell the Israelites, THE GOD WHO IS has sent me to you. As Psalm 89 puts it: Before the hills came to birth, before the whole frame of the world was engendered, from eternity to eternity, O God, thou art (v. 2). The comparison is clear. Abraham was born. Christ was not born, but even then at the moment of Abraham's creation, he *was,* i.e. he existed with that immutable, eternal existence which knows no change.

The Jews understood perfectly the sense of this affirmation and its consequences, because

(l) they took up stones to throw at him . . .

Now they do not speak; they take up stones. This time they do not even try to produce a legal pretext for their action, because they do not want to waste time. However, we know what it was, because a few days later they will do the same thing: It is for blasphemy; it is because thou, who art a man, dost pretend to be God (John io. 33). It was blasphemy to make oneself like to God, and the penalty was stoning (Lev. 24. 16). This was the very charge which Caiphas invented to have our Lord put to death.

(m) but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple:

There is no reason to suppose a miraculous flight, at least according to the Gospel narrative. This phrase read today, and which some authors consider to be the reason why the crosses are covered with a veil on that day, namely to signify the abandonment of the Jewish people by Christ, makes us think of the abandonment of the sinner when God, because of his obstinacy, leaves him hardened in his sin, without even allowing him to have remorse of conscience.

3. *Applications:*

(a) Apologetic ones:

The divinity of Christ is not exclusive to St John's Gospel, but it is certainly its main theme. We have already seen how, in this passage, Christ claimed (λ) identity in operation with the Father; (/>) his eternity; {c) the same substance as the Father.

(b) The identity of operation with the Father:

In God, as we know, operation and nature are one and the same. This identity Christ claimed very clearly on the occasion of another visit to Jerusalem: The Jews took occasion to rouse ill-will against Jesus for doing such things on the Sabbath. And Jesus answered them: My Father has never ceased working, and I too must be at work (John 5. 16-17). The argument is easy to follow and clear: My father is always at work whether it be the sabbath day or not; therefore I work with him. The Jews understood it perfectly. This made them more determined than ever to make away with him, that he not only broke the sabbath, but spoke of God as his own Father, thereby treating himself as equal to God {*ibid.* 18-19).

Now, Jesus usually rectifies any wrong understanding of his words; but not in this matter. Instead he speaks even more emphatically: Believe me when I tell you this, The Son cannot do anything at his own pleasure, he can only do what he sees his Father doing; what the Father does is what the Son does in his turn {*ibid.* 19). No wonder that he can say: all that belongs to the Father belongs to me (John 16. 15).

(c) The eternity of Jesus:

The claim to be co-cternal with the Father which is made in this passage is so clear that it needs no further comment. The Jews also understood it perfectly.

(d) Of the same substance as the Father:

Our Lord takes one more step. The Feast of the Dedication was being celebrated and, no sooner did they see him, than the Jews surrounded him and said: Flow long wilt thou go on keeping us in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us openly. The reply could not be more definite. I have told you, but you will not believe me. However there was more to come, because Christ intended to go further than ever before: therefore he says: My Father and I are one.

4. *Moral applications:*

The thought which dominates this Sunday's liturgy is that of the unjust persecution by his enemies of him who was the Just One, without sin.

We must also mention, among these applications, the blindness of the hardened sinner, the anger of the Jews and the patience of our Lord. Also the comparison between the truth of God and the lies of the devil, the way in which one can be a son of God or of the devil, according to one's works; the necessity of hearing the word of God and also the divinity of Christ—all these are profound themes for preaching and meditation on the eve of the Passion.

SECTION III. THE FATHERS

I. ST €YPRIAN

Envious people are the children of the devil

I. *The devil's cunning:*

(a) Envy: its importance:

To be jealous of what you see to be good, and to be envious of those who are better than yourself seems, beloved brethren, to be a slight and petty fault to the eyes of some people; and being thought trifling and of no account, it is not feared; not being feared it is contemned; being contemned it is not avoided easily, and thus it becomes a hidden mischief, which, as it is not perceived and therefore not guarded against by the the prudent, secretly weakens incautious souls. But, moreover, the Lord bade us be prudent and charged us to watch with careful solicitude, lest the adversary, who is always on the w'atch and always lying in wait for us, should creep stealthily into our breasts.

* A summary of the *Treatise on Jealousy and Envy.*

(b) The devil, deceiver and violent:

He presents to the eyes attractive forms and easy pleasures, that he may destroy chastity through the use of the sense of sight; he tempts the ears with harmonious music, that by the hearing of sweet sounds, he may enervate Christian vigour. He provokes the tongue by means of reproaches, he instigates the hand by exasperating wrongs to the extent of murder; to make men cheat he presents dishonest gains; to captivate the soul by money he heaps together dangerous hoards; he promises earthly honours that he may deprive us of heavenly ones; he makes a show of false things that he may steal away the true; and when he cannot secretly deceive, then he threatens plainly and openly, holding out the fear of turbulent persecution to vanquish God's senants—always restless, always hostile; crafty in peace and ferocious in persecution.

2. *The devil, father of envy:*

In heaven, at the beginning of the world:

Let us consider whence arises jealousy, when and how it begins. For so pernicious an evil will be more easily avoided by us if both the source and the magnitude of that evil be known.

From this evil, even at the ven' beginning of the world, the devil was the first who both perished himself and destroyed others. He who was living in angelic majesty', accepted and beloved of God, when he saw man made in the image and likeness of God, broke forth into jealousy and malevolent envy. But in his envy he did not manage to hurl anyone down before he was first hurled down himself, made captive before he takes captive, ruined before he ruins others. . . . How great an evil is that, my brethren, whereby an angel fell, whereby that lofty and illustrious grandeur could be defrauded and overthrown, whereby the deceiver was himself deceived.

3. *The sufferings of the jealous:*

(a) Envy is an evil without end and a suffering without alleviation:

How great is the evil of this moth which destroys the soul, this gangrene of the thoughts, this rust of the heart! To be envious of another's virtue or happiness, that is, to hate in him either what he richly deserves or the divine benefits; to turn the advantages of others into one's own mischief, to be tormented by the prosperity of others, to make another's glory one's own penalty' and, as it were, to apply a kind of executioner to one's own breast, to bring the tormenters to one's own thoughts and feelings, that they may tear us with inner pangs and may smite the very secret recesses of our hearts with their evil claws. ... To the envious no food is pleasing, no drink cheerful. They are ever sighing and groaning and grieving;

and since envy is never put off by the envious, the possessed heart is rent day and night. Other ills have their limit; and whatever wrong is done is at least bounded by the completion of the crime. In the adulterer the offence ceases when the sin is committed; in the case of the robber, the possession of the booty puts an end to his greed . . . jealousy has no limit; it is an evil continually enduring and a sin without end.

(b) Difficult of cure and evil in its effects, even on health:

The mischief is more trifling and the danger less when the wound is opened by a sword. The cure is easy where the evil is manifest; and when the medicine is applied the sore that is seen is quickly brought to health. The wounds of jealousy are hidden and secret; nor do they admit the remedy of a healing cure, because they have shut themselves in blind suffering within the hidden places of conscience. Whoever you are who are envious and malignant, observe how crafty and hateful you are to those whom you hate. Yet you are the enemy of no man's well-being more than your own. Whosoever he is whom you persecute with your jealous hate, he can escape you. You cannot escape yourself. Wherever you may be, your enemy is within you . . . you are captive under the tyranny of jealousy and no consolation can help you.

4. *The Doctrine of Christ:*

(a) Envy is a work of darkness:

The Apostle St Paul, giving instructions and warnings that we who have escaped from the darkness of the night, should walk in the deeds and works of light, says to us: Let us abandon the ways of darkness and put on the armour of light. Let us pass our time honourably, as by the light of day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in lust and wantonness, not in quarrels and rivalries (Rom. 13. 12-13). · I · Why do you rush into the darkness of jealousy? Why do you enfold yourself in the cloud of malice? Why do you quench all the light of peace and charity in the blindness of envy? Why do you return to the devil whom you had renounced ?...

(b) Live the works of light:

The man who hates his brother is in the dark, guides his steps in the dark, without being able to tell where he is going; darkness has fallen and blinded his eyes (1 John 2. 11). . . . For he is going unconsciously into hell, in ignorance and blindness; he is hurrying into punishment, departing, that is, from the light of Christ, who warns us: I am the light of the world, he said. He who follows me can never walk in darkness; he will possess the light which is life (John 8. 12). But he follows Christ who stands in his precepts, who walks in the way of his teaching, who follows his footsteps and his ways, who imitates that which Christ both did and taught; in

accordance with what Peter also exhorts and warns us, saying: He suffered for our sakes, and left you his own example; you were to follow in his footsteps (i Peter 2. 22).

(c) Charity and the Holy Spirit, incompatible with envy:

What did the Lord more frequently instil into his disciples, what did he more charge to be guarded and observed among his saving counsels and heavenly precepts than that with the same love wherewith he himself loved the disciples, we too should love one another? And in what manner does he keep either the peace or the love of the Lord who, when jealousy intrudes, can neither be peaceable or loving? Thus also the Apostle, St Paul... in another place, when he was advising that a man who has already been filled with the Holy Spirit and is a son of God by heavenly birth, should observe nothing but spiritual and divine things, he says: When I preached to you, I had to approach you as men with natural not with spiritual thoughts. You were little children in God's nursery, and I gave you milk, not meat; you were not strong enough for it. You are not strong enough for it even now'; nature still lives in you. Do not these rivalries, these dissensions among you shew that nature is still alive, that you are guided by human standards? (1 Cor. 3. 1-3).

(d) The Christian must destroy these attacks of the enemy:

Vices and carnal sins must be destroyed, my brethren, and the corrupting plague of the human body must be trampled down under foot with spiritual vigour, lest, being turned back to the conversation of the old man, we be entangled in deadly snares. . . . If we are the sons of God, if we have already become his temples, if, having received the Holy Spirit, we are living holy and spiritual lives, if we have raised our eyes to heaven, if we have lifted our hearts, filled with God and Christ, to things that are above, let us do nothing but what is worthy of God and Christ. . . . Consider that we are standing under the eyes of God, that we are pursuing the course of our life with God himself looking on and judging, that we may then at length be able to attain to the beholding of him, if we now delight him who sees us with our actions, if we show ourselves worthy of his praise and indulgence; if we, who are always to please him in his kingdom, previously please him in this world.

II. ST BASIL

(These extracts and summaries are taken from Homily 10 *De Diversis.*)

Anger: Its causes and remedies

1. *Description of anger:*

When we have experienced this vice in ourselves, not from interior motives, but born as it were from without, attacking us like

a sudden and a furious tempest, it is then that we prove the wonderful utility and excellence of the divine precepts. If at any time we have given free rein to our anger, loosing it with the fury of a torrent, and if at other times we have observed the indecorous change in those who allow themselves to be dominated by this vice, we shall have proved how opportune and true is that phrase of Scripture: the angry man is not decent (Prov. 11. 21, The Saint's own version).

(a) It changes a man into a beast:

When this vice has taken full possession of the soul it turns a man into a wild beast, nor docs it even allow him to be a man, because it deprives him of reason. What poison is for those who are poisoned, anger is for those who are angry. Like rabid dogs they attack like scorpions and bite like serpents.

(b) It makes men like madmen:

Through anger the tongue becomes unbridled and the mouth critical of others; the hands cannot keep still, insults, ravings, curses, blows and other excesses which are too numerous to name are all so many sins or vices which come from anger. Anger sharpens swords, commits murders; by it brother refuses to know his brother; fathers and sons let go unheeded the voice of nature. The angry forget themselves first, and then their families. Just as torrents, when they hurl themselves down steep places, drag with them everything in their path; so the violent and insolent attacks of the angry man prey on all.

For them there are no grey hairs which merit respect, no virtue nor kinship nor benefits received. . . . They do not cease until they have inflicted some harm on the one who has irritated them, or perhaps, as often happens, they receive it themselves, because often it happens that the things which blow up violently receive more harm than they inflict, since they are shattered by those tilings against which they crash.

(c) It makes them seem possessed:

Who can explain how it is that those who are prone to anger become irritated at the least thing, shout and rage in their fury . . . just as do those who are possessed by the devil, from whom they do not differ either in their gestures nor in the results of their rage. The blood of those who long for vengeance boils in their veins as if it were moved by fire . . . their eyes are not the same, their look is ferocious, throwing out flames; ... If they meet another adversary who resists them also with anger and fury, then they wound one another and receive what is their due who fight beneath the flag of this demon.

2. *Return meekness for anger:*

Do not you cure evil with evil or emulate one another in doing harm, because in these sad struggles he is more miserable who wins the

fight since he leaves it with a greater sin. Therefore do not do evil to anyone, nor do you pay the evil that is done to you with one even worse. Pass over in silence the evil done to you. . . . Be warned against becoming a mirror of the angry man. The echo does not come back so faithfully to him that speaks as does the insult against him who hurls it. . . . Let us drown this evil in its cradle, by all possible means avoiding anger. This is how we can avoid many evils, as well as the root and origin of them. Were you cursed? Return a blessing. Did someone hurt you? Be patient and suffer it. Do people despise you and consider you as nothing? Think within yourself that you are made from dust and that you must return to it (Gen. 3. 19).... In this way too, you will overcome your enemy, who cannot take revenge on you because you do not show yourself to be hurt by the insults he launches at you, while you yourself prepare for yourself the precious crown of patience.

(a) Supernatural motives:

If you believe me you will have to admit that, to the things which are said against you there is still more to be added. Do they call you Ιολν-bom, without glory, nothing, born in the lowest place? Do you then call yourself dust and ashes? You are not more than our Father Abraham, who addressed himself in that way (Gen. 18. 27). They call you ignorant, poor, one who is worth nothing? Using the words of David (Ps. 21. 7) call yourself a worm, bom of the dung hill.... Whose disciple do you prefer to be, of those saintly men of God or of those who are the children of the devil?

Take time and choose the better path, because with your example of meekness you will do much good, and by taking no heed of the insults you will more easily take vengeance on your offender. Is there anything more hurtful to the enemy than to see his adversary superior to all his attacks and insults. . . . Just as a man who aims blows at an insensible thing does evil only to himself (for neither does he harm his enemy nor placate his own anger) so he who hurls insults and evil words at a man who takes no notice of them, cannot give vent to or placate his anger.

(b) The example of Christ:

If you are called poor when you really are, then suffer the truth; if it is a lie what do you care? Do not be puffed up by those flatteries which exceed the limits of truth nor be cast down by those insults which do not concern you. Have you never seen how arrows pierce hard objects, which resist them, while they lose their force when they strike against soft things which give to their attack? Be sure that insult is somewhat similar.... Remember the insults which the Jews directed against him who is the author of all wisdom. You are a Samaritan and are possessed by a devil. . . . Have you been struck? So was the Lord, but he did not turn his face away from the blows

(Isaias 50. 6). Have they calumniated you? So they did the divine Judge. Have they stripped you of your clothes, as they did him? As yet you have not been crucified or condemned to death. As yet you have a long way to go to imitate him.

(c) A double consideration which is necessary:

Cast from your soul these two evils and dangers; that of considering yourself honourable and worthy of great things, and that of thinking that others are far inferior to you. If you avoid these two things then, even though you are insulted, you will not allow yourself to be carried away by anger. . . . Let your desires respect the presence of reason just as children do, who, when they tend to act immodestly, respect the presence of venerable old age.

3. *Anger: a useless passion:*

(a) Anger submitted to reason:

How, then, can we free ourselves from the harm done by anger? By giving this advice to it, that it should not put itself before reason... and by obliging it to obey reason as we would do a horse with a bridle, forcing it to be guided by reason wherever it goes.

(b) Useful if moderated by reason:

At times the soul finds itself weak from desire for sinful pleasure; then anger can stiffen it like an iron belt, and from weak and feeble it changes it into something austere and strong. If you do not rise up in anger against the devil then you do not hate him as you should.

4. *Look to Christ:*

(a) His humility and meekness:

How can we assure ourselves that this turbulent passion of the soul will not be directed towards undesirable things? By learning first of all that humility which the Lord teaches us by his words and by his example. He says: If anyone has a mind to be the greatest, he must be the last of all, and the servant of all (Mark 9. 34). At other times he receives with a meek spirit the blows that are given him (John 18. 22-23). The creator and Lord of heaven and earth, who is adored by all things, whether spiritual or material, who with his mighty word sustains all things (Heb. 1. 3) did not cast down living into hell the one who struck him, nor commanded the earth to open and swallow up the impious man, rather he admonishes him and says: If there was harm in what I said tell us what was harmful in it (John 18. 23); if, as the Lord has commanded, you train yourself to be the last of all, will you become indignant, as if your dignity had been injured by insults?

(b) Where there is enmity there is no place for the Spirit:

When a small child insults you, it is matter for laughter.... Therefore it is not the words themselves, but that pride and self-esteem

which each has that makes the insult and annoyance. ... Let us not close the door to the Holy Spirit. Where there are enmities, dissensions, quarrels and disputes, which produce continual turmoil in the soul, there the Spirit of meekness does not dwell.

III. ST AUGUSTINE

I. *Commentary on the Gospel* (cf. PL. 34, 1701-13);

(a) The devil, father of the evil ones:

They err, they blind themselves and become a people of darkness, believing lies, opposed to their creator. All nature is good, but an evil will vitiated human nature. The works of God cannot be evil, and man would not have been evil either, except that he made himself so.... And why are the Jews sons of the devil? Because they imitate him, not because they are born of him. . . . They discovered a father, not from whom to be born, but whom they could imitate in his works, to condemn themselves like him.

(b) The devil, a murderer:

The devil envied man and killed him; he was a murderer from the beginning. Think how he effected this murder. He was not armed with dagger or sword. No, he drew near to man, sowed an evil word and killed him. Are you not, then, a murderer when you give evil counsel to your brother? If he listens to it you have killed him. And that you may know that you have killed him, listen to the Psalmist (Ps. 56. 5) as he describes those whose envious tooth bites deeper than spears or arrows, whose tongue is as sharp as a sword. . . .

He was a murderer from the beginning, that is, from the moment that there were men to kill. .. and as for truth, he has never taken his stand upon that *(ibid.)*. He possessed it once, but he fell, because the truth was not in him as it was in Christ, who is truth itself. If he had remained in the truth he would have remained in Christ.

(c) For God or against him:

The Jews were of God and yet they were not. They were of God by nature, they were not of God by their works.... Nature came from God, it was good; but the will sinned, giving way to the persuasions of the devil, and thus acquired his vices. That is why it needs a physician, because it is not healthy.

They are of God and they are not, just as they were sons of Abraham and yet they were not. Listen to the Lord who says: Yes, I know you are of Abraham's breed (John 8. 37). Has the Lord ever been guilty of a lie? Never. Then what he says is true? Of course. Then it is certain they are children of Abraham? Certain! Then now listen to the same Lord when he denies it. If you are

Abraham's true children, it is for you to follow Abraham's example; as it is, you are designing to kill me, who tell you the truth as I have heard it from God. This was not Abraham's way. No, it is your father's example you follow. They were sons of Abraham and they were not. It is simple: sons of Abraham by carnal descent and not sons of Abraham because they had consented to the deceits of the devil.

(d) The patience of the Lord:

What relation can there be between the servants and the Lord, sinners and Just, the creature and the Creator? Just as if there is any evil in us it is our own, so if there is any good in us it is from him and through him. Well, there is nothing so much desired by man as power. Here you see the extraordinary power of God, but first of all you must imitate his patience. Which of us could stand being called possessed? Yet that is what they said about him who was the saviour of the world and the tamer of the demons.

(e) **The death we should fear**:

And you, Lord, what is it you say: if a man is true to my word, to all eternity he will never see death *(ibid.* 51). ... He who had to die addressed those who also had to die. . . . what does he mean by these words, To all eternity he will never see death? The Lord is talking about another death from which he came to free us, the second death, the eternal death of hell, the condemnation together with the devil and his angels. This is the true death, not this death of ours. What, then, is this death of ours? To abandon the body, abandon the flesh.

Let us not fear, then, this death, but the other. And what is sad is that many, because they fear this death, have fallen into the other. You have been born a man and you must die. Where shall you go so as not to die? What can you do to avoid it? Your Lord, to console you in this necessity, deigned to die voluntarily. When you see Christ dead, are you still afraid to die? You will die soon, there is nowhere you can go so as to avoid it. Today? Tomorrow? The point is that the moment must arrive. What are you doing, man, fleeing and hiding? Are you going to deceive death? . . . Let us not fear those who kill the body, but those who kill the soul.

2. *Why is it that you do not believe me when I tell you the truth?*

(This is a summary of St Augustine's doctrine in *Sermo* I on the Epistles of St John. His argument here is that Christ has taught us the truth, but that we do not listen to him because sin has made us deaf. The remedy is confession and hope in Christ. Cf. PL. 35, 1039-89.)

The only Son of God, who was from the beginning, became visible and tangible in time. Why did he come into the world and

what new thing had he come to tell us ? \\ hat did he wish to teach us? Why did he act in such a way that the Son of God should take flesh, wishing to sufl'er torments from men, above all indignity, allowing himself to be given blows by the very hands which he had made? . . . Listen: What then is this message we have heard from him and are passing on to you ? That God is light, and no darkness can find any place in him (i John i. 6).

To the truth by confession and charity:

(.After pointing out that the reason why we do not hear Christ's words is to be found in our sins and in our lack of charity, he points out that Christ came to wash away sins, and that man must 'confess what he is in order to be cured by him who is always what he is', i.e. the Saviour.)

Think of what follows: sin is with us; if we deny that, we are cheating ourselves, it means that truth does not dwell in us (i John i. 8). Therefore, if you confess that you are a sinner, truth dwells in you, and the truth is the light. As yet the fight has not reached its perfect brightness in you, because there are still sins, but it has begun to illuminate you. Look at what follows: It is when we confess our sins that he forgives us our sins, ever true to his word *(ibid.* 9). Not only the past sins but also those which we have, perhaps, contracted among the miseries of this life, since it is not possible for man, while he carries about with him the burden of this body, not to have some small sins.. .. And what hope have we to put against them ? In the first place, to confess them. . . .

Before all things, confession, then love. For what is said about charity? Charity draws the veil over a multitude of sins (1 Peter, 4. 8). The Apostle recommends charity to us precisely for those sins which escape our notice, because it extinguishes sins. Humility consists in recognizing that we are sinners; but not a humility which is merely of the lips, so as not to displease others should we call ourselves just.... Tell men what you are! Tell God; for if you do not tell God what you are he will condemn in you whatever he finds. Do you want him not to condemn you ? Then do you condemn yourself! Do you wish that he should not know your sins? Then do you know them and admit them, so that at last you may be able to say to God : Turn away thy face from my sins (Ps. 50. 4).

3. *The truth of Christ:*

(The first truth which Christ has taught us is the need for redemption and grace. Christ is the mediator of that redemption. This is the argument of Book 4 of the Treatise *De Trinitate,* in which there are passages of explanation concerning the Epistle and Gospel of today. PL. 42, 886-8; 895-8.)

(a) True and false knowledge:

The knowledge of things terrestrial and celestial is commonly thought much of by men. Yet those doubtless choose better who prefer to that knowledge, the knowledge of themselves. ... He who has now awakened from sleep and, assisted by the warmth of the Holy Spirit, lifts up his gaze towards God, knows his own weakness; such a one, wishing to come to him, yet not having the strength, through the light he gives has given heed to himself and has indeed found himself, learning that his own sickliness cannot mingle with the purity which is God; he feels it sweet to shed tears and to entreat him again and again that he will have compassion, until he shall have put off all his wretchedness. . . . Such a one . . . has obtained true knowledge, for he has preferred to know his own weakness rather than to know the walls of the world, the foundations of the earth and the pinnacles of heaven. And by obtaining this knowledge he has also obtained sorrow; sorrow for his own straying away from the desire to reach his own proper country—heaven.

(b) The first truth of which we must convince ourselves:

The first thing of which we must convince ourselves is of the greatness of God's love for us, so that we shall not be cast down by despair, which might prevent us from raising our eyes to him. And we had to be shown whom it is that he loves, lest being proud, as if it had been from our own merits, we should recoil the more from him and fail the more in our own weakness. For this reason he has so dealt with us that his strength helps us to continue, and the weakness of our humility is perfected by the strength of charity. . . . My grace is sufficient for thee.

(c) Christ, the mediator:

In this section St Augustine shows how Christ is the perfect mediator, reaching perfect harmony by joining two in one, who also, by one death and resurrection, overcame the double death of our souls and bodies. He describes the mediation of Christ thus: 'So that the Son of God himself, the Word of God, himself also the mediator between God and men, the Son of man, equal to the Father through the unity of the Godhead and partaker with us by the taking upon himself of our humanity, interceded for us with the Father in that he was man, yet not concealing that he was God, one with the Father, among other things says: Neither do I pray for these alone, but for them also who through their word shall believe in me, that they all may be one. . . .'

'He did not say, I and they are one, although, in that he is the head of the Church, which is his body, he might have said I and they are, not one thing, but one person, because the head and the body is one Christ.'

IV. ST GREGORY THE GREAT

1. *The man who belongs to God listens to God's words:*

That which should make most impression on us is what follows: the man who belongs to God listens to God's words; it is because you do not belong to God that you will not listen to me. ... Let each one of us ask himself if in his heart he listens with attention to those words, to see whose we are.

The Truth has told us that we must desire our eternal home, restrain the passions of the flesh, that we should despise earthly glory, that we should not covet the goods of others and that we should share our own. Let us examine our hearts, then, to prove whether this word of the Lord has taken root there, thus to see if we belong to him or not.

There are those who do not even wish to hear bodily the commandments of God; there are those who hear them materially, but do not become affected by them; there are others who receive them with joy, they repent and weep, but when the time of weeping has passed, they return to their iniquity. None of these hear the word of God from the moment when they refuse to put it into practice.

2. *Against anger: meekness:*

See how the Lord replies to such a great insult. ... He limits himself to a patient refutation of the calumny, saying: I am not possessed. What is the lesson he teaches us if not that of fighting our pride, which, if it should be angry, however slightly, returns greater insults than those it receives, does all the harm it can and threatens that which it cannot effect?

See how the Lord does not take vengeance, returning insult for insult; and that in spite of the fact that, had he wished, he could have said: I have not a devil, but you surely are possessed. Then he would have spoken nothing but the truth, since unless they had been possessed by the devil they would never have hurled insults against God. No, Truth itself hears the insult and does not reply with the truth, so that he cannot be said to have given injury for injury, even though it might have been the truth.

What is the lesson? When our neighbour does us an injury let us hide his real faults, so as not to convert the mystery of correction into an instrument of our anger.

3. *The Lord hides himself: an example of patience:*

It is a wonderful thing, my dear brethren, that the Lord who, had he willed to use his divine power, could by one simple act of his will, have made them victims of their own stones or have smitten them with a sudden death, nevertheless, hides himself from his

* PL. 76, 465 ff.

enemies. He had come to suffer and he did not wish to judge. Even in the very hour of his passion he demonstrated his power, yet at the same time he suffered all that he had come to suffer ... to his persecutors who came to look for him he said: I am he, and by that mere word he confounded their pride and drove them to the earth. This Lord, who could have delivered himself from their hands without hiding himself, what reason has he for going into hiding? Only one; our Redeemer came to teach us, sometimes in words, and at others by his example. And the example he gives us on this occasion what is it except that we should modify our anger with humility until we can find some other way of offering resistance.

4. *The truth hides himselffrom those who reject him:*

This phrase, *he hid himself* can have another interpretation. Jesus Christ had preached many times to the Jews, who were determined to mock at his words. This preaching only served to make them worse, until at last they took up stones to kill him. The Lord hides himself to show us that the truth hides itself from those who will not follow it. The truth hides from the intellect which refuses to be humble. . . . How many there are today who loathe the Jews for their hardness of heart, and yet they do exactly the same thing with their words as did the Jews when they rejected the faith. They hear the commands of the Lord and they admit his miracles, but they refuse to be converted. See how he calls us and we do not wish to return to him. See how long he waits, yet we do not heed his patience. My dear brethren, while there is yet time, let each one abandon his evil; let him fear that God's patience may become exhausted, lest, despising him now when he is so patient, we may have to suffer him later when he is angry.

SECTION IV. THEOLOGIANS

I. ST THOMAS AQUINAS

The Priesthood of Christ

There is no Sunday of the year which gives us a better opportunity than this one of preaching on the priesthood of Christ. The passage from the Epistle to the Hebrews, although not the most explicit, can and should be taken in conjunction with the immediate context; i.e. with chapters 7-9, where the whole idea of the priesthood is fully developed. The ideas of Aquinas, running as they do parallel to those of Paul, open a new horizon to the preacher and give him new' ideas concerning the Passion w'hich are most useful. For this reason we shall give many quotations in full, rather than limit ourselves to a mere summary.

i. *The functions of a priest:*

(a) As mediator:

The office proper to a priest is to be mediator between God and the people, i.e. inasmuch as he bestows divine things on the people, wherefore the word *(sacerdos)* means a giver of sacred things, according to Malach. 2. 7. They shall seek the law at his (i.e. the priest's) mouth. .And again, in so far as he offers up the peoples' prayers to God and, in a manner, makes satisfaction to God for their sins; wherefore the Apostle says (Heb. 5.1): every high priest is chosen from among his fellow men, and made a representative of men in their dealings with God, to offer gifts and sacrifices in expiation of their sins (3. q. 22. a. 1. c).

(b) Sacrifice: the primary function of priesthood:

In the priestly office we may consider two things; first the offering of sacrifice; secondly the consummation of the sacrifice, consisting in this, that those for whom the sacrifice is offered, obtain the end of the sacrifice (3. a. 22. a. 5. c).

(c) Prayer is a secondary function of the priesthood:

Although prayer is befitting to priests, it is not their proper office, for it is befitting for everyone to pray both for himself and for others, according to James 5. 16: pray for one another that you may be saved (3. q. 22. a. 4. *ad* turn.).

2. *The priesthood of Christ:*

(a) Christ is a priest:

Now this is most befitting to Christ. For through him are gifts bestowed on men, according to 2 Peter 1. 4. He hath given us great and most precious promises, that by these you may be made partakers of die Divine nature. Moreover, he reconciled the human race to God, according to Col. 1. 19-20: In him it hath well pleased (the Father) that all fullness should dwell and through him to reconcile all things unto himself. Therefore it is most fitting that Christ should be a priest (3. q. 22. a. 1. c).

(b) He is a priest as man:

Although Christ was a priest, not as God, but as man, yet one and the same was both priest and God. Wherefore in the Council of Ephesus we read: If anyone say that the very Word of God did not become our High Priest and Apostle when he became flesh and a man like us, but altogether another one, the man born of a woman, let him be anathema.

(c) Christ has the fullness of the priesthood:

Speaking of the Eucharist St Thomas says: But it contains within itself Christ, in whom there is not the character, but the very plenitude of the priesthood (3. q. 63. a. 6. c).

For this reason it is unbecoming that Christ should have a character, but his priesthood is compared to a character as that which is complete and perfect is compared to some participation of itself (3· q· 53· »▮ 5· c).

(d) Christ, origin of all priesthood:

That a man is competent to be a priest is something which affects the soul, the subject of the character of orders; hence a man does not lose his priestly order by death, and much less does Christ, who is the fount of the entire priesthood (3. q. 50. a. 4. *ad ÿum*).

Now Christ is the fountainhead of the entire priesthood: for the priest of the Old Law was a figure of him; while the priest of the new Law works in his person, according to 2 Cor. 2. 10: for what I have pardoned, if I have pardoned anything, for your sakes have I done it in the person of Christ (3. q. 22. a. 4. c).

3. *The priesthood of the laity:*

(a) It is a spiritual priesthood:

A devout layman is united to Christ by spiritual union through faith and charity, but not by sacramental power: consequently, he has a spiritual priesthood for offering spiritual sacrifices, of which it is said (Ps. 50. 19): A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit; and (Rom. 12. 1) present your bodies a living sacrifice. Hence too, it is written (1 Peter 2. 5), A holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices (3. q. 82. a. I. *ad 2um*).

(b) The layman participates in the priesthood of Christ by means of the sacraments: especially through the character:

Every sacrament makes a man a participator in Christ's priesthood, from the fact that it confers on him some effect thereof (3. q. 63. a. 6. *ad luni*).

... so his faithful are like him by sharing a certain spiritual power with regard to the sacraments and to things pertaining to the divine worship ... (3. a. 63. a. 5. c).

A character is a kind of seal by which the soul is marked, so that it may receive, or bestow on others, things pertaining to divine worship (3. q. 63. a. 4. c).

(c) Christ: eternal priest:

Now the end of the sacrifice which Christ offered consisted, not in temporal goods, but in eternal, which we obtain through his death ... for which reason the priesthood of Christ is said to be eternal (3. a. 22. a. 5. c).

Although Christ's passion and death are not to be repeated, yet the virtue of that Victim endures for ever, for as it is written (Heb. 10. 14): by one oblation he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

4. *Christ, priest and victim:*

(a) Three motives of sacrifice:

Now man is required to offer sacrifice for three reasons. First, for the remission of sin, by which he is turned away from God. Hence the Apostle says (Heb. 5. 1): that it pertains to a priest to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. Secondly, that man may be preserved in a state of grace, by ever adhering to God, wherein his peace and salvation consist. MTerefore, under the Old Law the sacrifice of peace offerings was offered up for the salvation of the offerers, as is prescribed in the third chapter of Leviticus. Thirdly, in order that the Spirit of man may be perfectly united to God: which will be most perfectly realized in glory. Hence under the Old Law, the holocaust was offered, so called because the victim was entirely burned, as we read in the first chapter of Leviticus.

(b) Triple effect of the sacrifice of Christ:

Now these effects were conferred on us by the humanity of Christ.

i. For in the first place, our sins were blotted out, according to Rom. 4. 25: by him who was delivered up for our sins.

ii. Secondly, through him we received the grace of salvation, according to Heb. 5. 9. He became to all that obey him the cause of eternal salvation.

iii. Thirdly, through him we have acquired the perfection of glory, according to Heb. 10. 19: we have a confidence in the entering into the Holies (i.e. the heavenly glory) through his blood. Therefore Christ himself, as man, was not only priest, but also a perfect victim, being at the same time victim for sin, victim for peace-offering, and a holocaust (3. a. 22. a. 2. c).

(c) He attains for us the pardon of our sins:

Two things are required for the perfect cleansing from sins, corresponding to the two things contained in sin, namely, the stain of sin and the debt of punishment. The stain of sin is, indeed, blotted out by grace, by which the sinner's heart is turned to God, whereas the debt of punishment is entirely removed by the satisfaction that man offers to God. Now the priesthood of Christ produces both these effects. For by its virtue grace is given to us, by which our hearts are turned to God, according to Rom. 3. 24-25: being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation through his blood. Moreover, he satisfied for us fully inasmuch as he hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows (Isa. 53. 4). Wherefore it is clear that the priesthood of Christ has full power to expiate sins.

5. *The priesthood of Christ prefigured in the Old Law:*

(a) Melchisedech:

As stated above, the priesthood of the Old Law was a figure of the priesthood of Christ, not as adequately representing the reality, but as falling far short thereof; both because the priesthood of the Law did not wipe away sins, and because it was not eternal, as the priesthood of Christ. Now the excellence of Christ's over the Levitical priesthood was foreshadowed in the priesthood of Melchisedech, who received tithes from Abraham in whose loins the priesthood of the Law was tithed. Consequently, the priesthood of Christ is said to be according to the order of Melchisedech, on account of the excellence of the true priesthood over the figurai priesthood of the Law.

(b) The priests of the Law:

Two things may be considered in Christ's priesthood, namely, the offering made by Christ and our partaking thereof. As to the actual offering, the priesthood of Christ was more distinctly foreshadowed by the priesthood of the Law, by reason of the shedding of blood, than by the priesthood of Melchisedech in which there was no blood-shedding (3. q. 22. a. 6. *ad 2wn).*

IL J. B. FRANZELIN

(Once we have explained St Thomas's clear doctrine there is no need to do more than give a brief summary of the doctrine of mediation and the character of substitution which exists in the sacrifice of Christ, a summary which we have adapted from Franzelin: *De Verbo Incar.* Th. 46, 47 and 49: ed. 5, Rome 1922; pp. 404-525.)

1. *Definition:*

A mediator is one who holds a middle place between two persons with the idea of bringing them to some kind ofunity or reconciliation.

(a) The conditions necessary for a mediator:

He must have something in common with the two extremes. This condition is what is known as ontological mediation. Within this there will be different grades, according to the category of the elements in which the mediator shares; thus, Moses was a mediator, joining the people to God by his intercession.

(b) Natural mediation the foundation of moral mediation:

The natural mediator between God and man must be one who holds that position by his very nature; so that he must be a son of Adam and also, he must be God, thus uniting in himself the two natures which he intends to reconcile. Thus St Irenaeus: It is

necessary that the mediator between God and man should bring us to a common concord and friendship, because he forms part of the family of one and the other.

(c) The three terms in mediation:

i. men;

ii. God;

iii. Christ made man, united with the former by the same human nature and with God by means of the hypostatic union, being one of the divine persons.

(d) Moral mediation:

The purpose of the Incarnation was simply the exercise of moral mediation by which we might be reconciled to God (Col. 1. 19-20).

(e) The satisfaction and merits of Jesus:

This mediation was achieved, not in any way, but specifically through the satisfaction and merits of the death of Christ (Rom. 3. 25). If this was to be just and perfect it demanded the ontological mediation to such an extent that Christ, had he not been man, could not have made satisfaction for men, and had he not been God his actions would not have had that value which was necessary for a just satisfaction.

2. *The satisfaction of Christ:*

The Catholic doctrine:

In reality', Christ did not take upon himself the guilt of our sins, nor can we say with juridical truth, that he was chastised, because that implies a fault one has committed oneself. His merit and satisfaction, then, consist in this; that he as our head took upon himself most freely the obligation of making full satisfaction for the guilt and penalties merited by his members, through his work and sufferings, to the extent of the death on the cross. This will God accepted and ratified. Therefore Christ took the place of mankind before God and satisfied to God by the infinite offering of his death, a satisfaction which, given the dignity of the Person who suffered, was sufficient and super-abundantly so, to compensate for the injury done to God by sin and the penalties incurred by it. In this sense only can we really use the words penalty or chastisement of the sufferings of Christ.

Therefore the vicarious satisfaction and redemption by Christ are due to the infinite mercy of God, anxious to pardon men; to the infinite justice, which demanded that a man, head and representative of the race, should give full satisfaction for the guilt and punishment merited by sin; and to the fact that the infinite mercy, justice and wisdom of God knew how to find the means by which the Word could be made man.

We can concrete this into three points:

i. God did not impose on Christ any punishment, instead he inspired him to offer himself for us and once that offering had been freely made, then God accepted his death as satisfaction.

ii. This offering of Christ did not consist in willing his passion in a direct way or even in an indirect way; but through his free acceptance of it, his not impeding it, and his offering of all that the malice of his enemies prepared for him and which he knew of beforehand.

iii. The true reason for the merit of the passion of Christ does not consist in either the pain or the death, in spite of the fact that the victim was a Person of infinite value; but in the voluntary oblation which Christ made of all these elements.

SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. FRAY LUIS DE LEON

(We shall give a brief summary of the main ideas concerning Christ, the Priest and Victim, contained in the *Names of Christ.* Fray Luis makes great play on the idea of Christ, the victim substituted for us.)

1. *Christ destroys sin:*

Christ, our Lord and our only good, did two things in his own person that being done in him they might also be done in us, who are one with him, one to destroy the spirit of evil in us and the other to give us the spirit of Good.

To kill sin, to destroy evil and to remedy the disorder of our first origins, he died in the person of us all, and, as far as in him lies, in him we all receive death. We were all in him and in him we are dead, never to live again to that manner of life and being.

2. *He destroys it in us:*

From this first death which was done in the person of Christ and in which both sin and the old man died, is born the strength of which St Paul speaks, writing to the Romans (Rom. 6. 6.); which is equivalent to telling them that when Christ died to this mortal life which is the figure of sin, they also died in him to all that belongs to that way of life . . . wherefore he does not sympathize with them at all when they wish to return to that former way of life which, since they were in Christ, they have left for ever.

3. *Christ died as a public person:*

In this section of his sermon Fray Luis makes three points: (λ) that Christ represented the whole human race (Rom. 7. 4); *(b)* the proof of this can be found in the Eucharist, 'because, taking the

bread and giving it to his disciples, he said to them: this is my body which shall be given for you (Matt. 26. 26), thus giving us to understand that his true body was under those species and that it is there in the form in which it would be offered on the cross . .. thus, since bread is something made of many grains which, losing their first form through the water and the fire, make one bread, so our Bread of life, having joined to himself our nature in the bonds of love's secret power, and having made one body of himself and us, . . . offered himself on the cross.' (c) Christ died as it were vested with all of us. (The image is taken from the vestments of the High Priest in the Old Law, which represented the people of Israel.) Tn the same way Christ, supreme High Priest, in whose image and figure the high priesthood of the Old Law was made, was vested in us when he went up to the altar of his cross, sacrificing himself and us in him, thus putting an end to our old evil.'

4. *Christ unites us to himself in his death:*

(a) Without death the penalty was not paid nor the fault expiated:

From one point of view it was convenient for us to die (since ours had been the fault), but on the other hand, being ours, that death was useless. Thus it was necessary, not only that another should die, but also that we should die in and with him who should be so just that, because we were in him, our death should have an infinite value.

(b) Christ made his own our sins:

As in the Old Law the priest imposed his hands on that animal with which the people washed away their sins, saying that he burdened it with all the offences they had committed (Lev. 16. 21), so he, because he was a priest, took on his shoulders the fault of the guilty people, by means of a spiritual and ineffable union, with which God is wont to join many in one.

(c) In this we can see the force of his love and the greatness of the suffering:

In which, like some new marvel, we can see two things, the greatness of his love and also the pain he suffered. That love which could unite in one the two extremes of justice and of guilt; the sorrow in a soul so pure and clean on seeing himself burdened, as if they were his, with so much punishment and guilt. If we consider it we shall see that this must have been one of the chief sufferings of Christ, which, if I am not wrong, was one of the two reasons for the agony and sweat of blood in the garden.

IL DOM COLUMBA MARMION

Christ, our Redeemer

i. *The substitution:*

Sin, which destroyed the divine life within us, demands a satisfaction, an expiation without which it would be impossible for divine life to be restored to us. Being a mere creature, man cannot give this satisfaction for an offence of infinite malice, and, on the other hand, the Divinity can neither suffer nor expiate. God cannot communicate his life to us unless sin be blotted out; by an immutable decree of Divine Wisdom, sin can only be blotted out if it be expiated in an adequate manner. How is this problem to be solved?

The Incarnation gives us the answer. Consider the Babe of Bethlehem. He is the Word made flesh. The humanity that the Word makes his own is possible; it is this humanity which will suffer, will expiate. These sufferings, these expiations, will belong, however, to the Word, as this humanity itself does; they will take from the Divine Person an infinite value which will suffice to redeem the world, to destroy sin, to make grace superabound in souls like an impetuous and fructifying river. . . .

Doubtless, as you know, it was necessary to await the immolation of Calvary for the expiation to be complete; but, as St Paul teaches us, it was from the first moment of his Incarnation that Christ accepted to accomplish his Father's will and to offer himself as Victim for the human race (Heb. 10. 5). . . . It is from the Crib that he inaugurates this life of suffering such as he willed to live for our salvation, this life of which the term is Golgotha, and that, in destroying sin, is to restore to us the friendship of the Father.

2. *The freedom of the offering:*

This freedom with which Jesus gives his life is entire. And this is one of the most admirable perfections of his sacrifice, one of the aspects that touch our human hearts most deeply. . . . All is perfect in the sacrifice of Jesus—the love that inspires it, and the liberty with which he accomplishes it. Perfect, too, the gift offered: Christ offers himself.

Christ offered the whole of himself: his soul and body were bruised and broken by suffering; there is no suffering that Jesus has not known . . . The Word Incarnate knew all the sufferings that were to fall upon him throughout the long hours of his Passion. The vision awoke in his sensitive nature all the repulsion that a simple creature would thereby have experienced; in the Divinity to which it was united, his soul saw clearly all the sins of mankind, all the outrages committed against God's holiness and infinite love.

He had taken on himself all these iniquities; he was, as it were, clad with them, he felt all the wrath of divine justice weigh upon

him. ... He foresaw that for many men his blood would be shed in vain, and this sight brought the grief of his blessed soul to its climax. But, as we have seen, Christ accepted all *(Christ in His mysteries,* pp. 126 and 252).

III. FRAY LUIS OF GRANADA

(In *The Sinner's Guide,* Fray Luis uses today's Gospel to explain how God sometimes abandons the sinner who refuses to repent. We shall give a summary of the main ideas.)

I. *The wicked abandoned by God:*

The wicked live in this world abandoned by God if they refuse to repent. God has done all he can to call them to him, and there is nothing that he has left undone: Let me tell you then what I mean to do to this vineyard of mine. I mean to rob it of its hedge, so that all can plunder it, to break down its wall, so that it will be trodden under foot. I mean to make waste land of it; no more pruning and digging; only briars and thorns will grow there, and I will forbid the clouds to water it (Isaias 5. 5-6). This implies that God will remove from such souls his help, from which will come total fall and complete destruction.

2. *The loss of God's loving care and providence:*

What greater evil and misery than to live far from that care and providence of God and to be abandoned to the calamities and attacks of the world and of this life? There are so many things which can harm us on all sides and without God we can do nothing.

3. *The penalties which God's providence visits on the wicked:*

Divine regard that watches ever this kingdom, marks ever its guilt; I will blot it out, believe me, from the face of the earth (Amos 9. 8). In other words, God, who formerly looked after us with loving eyes, will now turn that same gaze upon us and look for moments and things with which to punish us. An angry God is a terrible enemy (Amos 9. 1-4; Jeremias 1. 11; Job 9. 4).

Who can sleep safe, knowing that, while he slumbers there is God, like the branch of a tree of which Jeremias speaks, waiting to chastise him, and preparing suffering for him? What counsel will have any value against his counsel; whose arm can stand against his? Who has ever taken up arms against him, as *Job* says, and resisted him and has been in peace?

This abandonment by divine providence is one of the greatest of God's punishments, perhaps even the most severe in *this world,* as he himself has testified in the Scriptures *(cf. Ps. 80.* 12-13; Osee 4. 6). 'Take care, then; if the thought of his love and the goodness of his providence is not sufficient to move your heart, at least let the thought of this abandonment move you; because at times those

who arc not moved by the thought of good things can be touched by the consideration of the evils which are likely to befall them.' 'Rash fools,' says God in the book of Proverbs (1. 23-29), 'will you never learn? Pay heed, then, to my protest, listen while I speak out my mind to you, give you open warning. Since my call is unheard, since my hand beckons in vain, since my counsel is despised and all my reproof goes for nothing, it will be mine to laugh, to mock at your discomfiture, w'hcn perils close about you. Close about you they will, affliction and sore distress, disasters that sweep down suddenly, gathering storms of ruin. It will be their turn, then, to call aloud; my turn, then, to refuse and not answer. They will be early abroad looking for me, but find me never; fools that grew weary of instruction and would not fear the Lord.'

IV. ST FRANCIS DE SALES

i. *Humility and good name:*

(a) Humility cannot renounce its good name . . .

Now, since humility cannot permit us to have any desire of excelling or of being preferred to others, it cannot permit us to seek for praise, honour or glory which are due to excellence alone. Yet humility readily falls into line with the counsel of the Wise Man, who admonishes us to take care of a good name (Ecclus. 41. 15) because a good name is an esteem, not of some excellence, but only of an ordinary and plain uprightness and integrity of life. Humility does not prevent us from recognizing this in ourselves, nor, in consequence, from desiring the reputation for such. It is true that humility would despise a good name if charity had no need of it; but because it is one of the foundations of society, and because without it we are not only useless but harmful to society, by reason of the scandal thereby given, charity requires and humility assents that we should desire a good name and carefully preserve it.

(b) But we should not be too preoccupied by it:

We must not, however, be too eager, exacting and punctilious in preserving it; for those who are so touchy and sensitive about their good name, resemble those who take medicine for every little ailment; for, thinking to preserve their health, they utterly ruin it; and in like manner, those who are so sensitive about keeping their good name, lose it entirely, for by this touchiness they become capricious, obstinate and unbearable, and provoke the ill-will of calumniators.

(c) To despise calumny is a good remedy against it:

Disregard and contempt of injury and calumny is normally a far better remedy than resentment, wrangling and vengeance; contempt causes them to disappear; if we resent them, we seem to avow them. . . . Slander hurts none but them who fear it.

(d) We should prefer virtue to reputation:

First, because it is worth more and secondly because calumny and injury help rather then hinder us in the path of virtue.

(e) A distinction of note:

We must give up this idle intercourse, this useless practice, this frivolous friendship, this foolish intimacy, if it be injurious to our good name, for a good name is worth more than empty satisfactions of any kind; but if we are blamed, chided, calumniated for practising piety, for advancing in devotion and for progressing towards our eternal good, let us leave these curs to bay at the moon. . . .

(f) Some exceptions:

I except, however, certain crimes so atrocious and infamous that no one ought to suffer the false imputation of them, if he can justly clear himself; and certain persons, upon whose good reputation depends the edification of many; for in this case we must tranquilly seek the separation of the wrong received, according to the opinion of theologians *(Introduction to the Devout Life,* Pt. 3, ch. 7).

SECTION VI. PAPAL TEXTS

I. *Christ, the mediator of a New Covenant:*

(a) The great work of Christ was to reconcile man with God. This he did all his life by means of a complete offering of himself to the Father. This sacrificial offering continued all his life, to be consummated on Calvary". All his activity among men had no other purpose. As a child he is presented in the temple to the Lord; as a youth he returns to him; later he goes there to teach the people and to pray. . . . On the following day, lifted up between heaven and earth, he offers the sacrifice of his life and, from his pierced heart burst forth, in some way, the sacraments, which distribute to souls the treasures of the redemption. In doing all this he had as his main purpose, the glory of his Father and the greater sanctification of men *(Mediator Dei,* cf. Pius XII, *To the recently married,* 1940).

(b) In one oblation of himself he sanctified all men; for which reason all the baptized are princes of the blood, sealed with the blood of Christ, which leaves an indelible mark on our souls (cf. *To the recently married,* July 1940).

(c) But it is absolutely necessary that all should put themselves into the closest possible contact with the sacrifice of the Cross, by means of the sacraments, especially the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, in order to attain the fruits of that salvation which was won for us by him on the Cross. Through this actual and personal participation, as the members are made daily more like the divine Head

so that salvation which comes from the head flows into the members ... *{Mediator Dei).*

(d) The eucharistie sacrifice is a true sacrifice, one with that of the Cross, because there is the same priest, the same victim, offered for the same ends.

The august sacrifice of the altar is not, then, a mere commemoration of the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, but a true and proper sacrificial offering in which, by an unbloody immolation, the sovereign priest does what he already did on the cross, offering himself to the eternal Father as a most acceptable victim ... It is, therefore the same priest, Jesus Christ, whose sacred Person is represented by his minister. The priest is, in fact, assimilated to the sovereign priest by the consecration he has received, and he is enabled to act with the power and in the name of Christ himself. That is why it can be said that, by his priestly action, the priest, as it were, lends his tongue to Christ and offers him his hand.

The victim likewise is the same, namely, the divine Redeemer according to his human nature and in the truth of his body and blood. The manner in which Christ is offered, however, is different . . .

Moreover the ends proposed are the same; the first of these is the giving of glory to the heavenly Father. From his birth to his death Jesus was inflamed with the desire for the glory of God; and from the Cross the offering of his blood ascended to heaven like a sweet perfume. And, in order that this homage should never cease, the members are united with their divine head in the eucharistie sacrifice and, together with him, the angels and the archangels, they address to God an unceasing chorus of praise, offering to the almighty Father all honour and glory.

The second end is to give to God the thanks that are due to him. The divine Redeemer alone, because he is the most beloved Son of the Father and knows fully his immense love, was capable of offering a fitting hymn of thanksgiving — ... he does not cease to give thanks in the holy sacrifice of the altar.

The third end of the sacrifice is expiation, propitiation and reconciliation. Assuredly, no one else but Christ could offer to God full satisfaction for all the faults of the human race ... in the same way he offers himself daily on the altars for our redemption, so that, having been rescued from eternal damnation, we may be numbered among the flock of his elect.

In the fourth place, there is the end of impétration. Man, like the prodigal son, has misused and wasted all the good things received from the heavenly Father, and so finds himself reduced to a condition of the greatest poverty and squalor. But from the cross Christ, offering up prayers and supplications, with a strong

> cry and tears . . . was heard for his reverence. In the same way, on the holy altars, he carries out the same efficacious mediation, so that we may he filled with every blessing and grace *(Mediator Dei).*

2. *Why is it that you do not believe me when I tell you the truth?*

It is the truth of the doctrine of Christ, one for all men, whether of high or low social station, which should be the guide of all our actions, not mere sentiment. However, it is possible for man to resist the truth for many reasons: 'It is the same with the Catholic Faith. It is sometimes not without difficulty that a man makes up his mind in favour of its credentials ... A man may be so blinded by prejudice, so much at the mercy of his passions and his animosity', that he can shake his head and remain unmoved; not only the evidence of external proofs, which is plain to the view, but even the heavenly inspirations which God conveys to our minds can go for nothing.'

The faculty of seeing the truth can also diminish through self-love, pride and vanity'.

> In the case of those who profess to take reason as their sole guide, there would hardly be found, if indeed, there ever could be found, unity' of doctrine. Indeed, the art of knowing things as they really are is exceedingly difficult; moreover, the mind of man is by nature feeble and drawn this way and that by a variety' of opinions; and not seldom led astray by impressions coming from without; and, furthermore, the influence of the passions often-times takes away, or certainly at least diminishes, the capacity for grasping the truth. On this account, in controlling State affairs means are often taken to keep those together by force, who cannot agree in their way of thinking (Leo XIII, *Sap. Christianae,* io Jan. 1890).

3. *Believe me, before Abraham ever came to be, I am:*

(a) Christ is the arbiter of the past and the future. He is over and above the centuries of time, and although time passes, he ever remains. The spirit of Christ has not lost its power and even now it can triumph today as it has done before, because the Gospel is no dead letter, but the living substance of life on earth in order to reach heaven. Heaven and earth may pass away, but not his words (cf. Pius XII, 24 November 1940; 17 February 1942; *Christmas Message,* 1943).

> 'The spirit which comes from him has lost nothing of its power, still being capable of saving fallen humanity. If he once triumphed over paganism, why should he not triumph today, when sufferings and disillusionment of all kinds show to so many souls the vanity and fallacy of the paths followed up to now in both public and private life ?... As the figure of this world passes away, show to them all that there is only one true life which consists in knowing

thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent' (Pius XII, *Christmas Message,* 1943).

(b) Among the nations there exists today a false estimation of values, which makes it more than ever necessary that the Church should have full freedom to teach her doctrine, so that the spirit of justice and fraternal charity should penetrate all walks of life. The best systems of government will fail unless they are imbued with the spirit of the hunger and thirst for justice which was in Christ (cf. Pius XII, *Hom. for Easter,* 9 April, 1939; *To the Minister of Lithuania,* 18 October 1939; *Vigil of Christmas,* 1939).

(c) To escape from the present crisis we must build on one foundation only—Christ; for only he, all-powerful as he is, can bend the wills of men. Therefore those nations are doubly blessed whose laws are founded on the Gospel (cf. *To the recently married,* 26 June 1940; *Hom. for Easter,* 24 March 1940; *At the Consecration of twelve missionary bishops,* 29 August 1939).

(d) Therefore the Pope begs for the triumph of God in the lives of individuals, nations and peoples, a triumph which should encourage all, because the words of Christ will never pass away (cf. Pius XII, *Vigil of Christmas,* 1940; *Last Sunday of Pentecost,* 24 November 1940).

SECTION VII. SERMON SCHEMES

I. LITURGICAL

Memory of the Passion

Passiontide

A time for remembrance of the Passion, bringing back to our minds the sufferings and death of the Redeemer.

1. *The external characteristics demonstrate this:*

(a) the cross and statues veiled, as if the Church were in mourning;

(b) suppression of the *Gloria* in the Mass.

2. *The lessons and other liturgical formulas show it too:*

(a) the lessons are taken from Jcremias, symbol of Christ humbled and persecuted;

(b) we see Christ, through the eyes of St John's Gospel, persecuted by the Pharisees and chief priests;

(c) the cross occupies pride of place in the Mass and office.

i. *the preface*: You have nailed the salvation of the world to the wood of the Cross, that from whence death was born life also should be born, and that he who won his victory through a tree should be vanquished on a tree.

ii. *the hymns: triumph of the Cross:*

The king's own standard is unfurled
The Cross in mystic splendour glows. (Vespers.)

Sing, my tongue, that glorious combat,
When, victorious in the fray,
Christ our Lord a trophy made him
Of the cross whereon he lay. (Lauds.)

3. *The testimony of the Fathers leads us to the same conclusion:*

(a) St Leo the Great exhorts us, in the lessons of the second Noctum, to intensify our fasts and mortifications, so that, united with Christ we may do something of that which he did;

(b) the Greek Church prays that we may contemplate the saving Cross which gave to us our sanctification.

Special graces and our disposition for obtaining them

1. *Passiontide is a time of special graces:*

All the liturgical seasons are, but this one especially, because it is consecrated to the memor}· of the cross, source of all grace.

2. *It needs special dispositions on the part of the faithful:*

(a) for that reason the invitatory of Matins says: If today you hear his voice harden not your hearts;

(b) St Leo says: Let us excite our devotion, especially in these days.

The dispositions

1. *Meditation on the passion:*

All will find in it material for prayer and thought.

2. *Gratitude to God and Christ:*

(a) prayer of gratitude because:

i. *the Father,* so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son (John 3. 16);

ii. *Christ,* loved us and delivered himself up for us (Eph. 5. 1);

(b) frequent reception of the Eucharist, the finest act of thank-giving;

(c) contemplation and adoration of the Cross with gratitude (The Stations of the Cross).

3. *Repentance for sin:*

(a) Passiontide includes the last two weeks of the old public penances, in which time the penitents who were to receive absolution on Holy Thursday made their final preparations by increasing their sorrow. The spirit of the Liturgy has not changed nowadays.

(b) It will help us if we remember, What was the ransom that freed you. ... It was not paid in earthly currency, silver or gold; it was paid in the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1. 18-19).°

4. *Mortification:*

(a) Let us adore the sacred wood with outstretched hands, with shining fasting, for praise and glory of the Most High (Greek hymn for this time of the year).

(b) St Leo says that true piety (especially at this time) goes hand in hand with persecution and sanctification and that to all the faithful it has been said: If any man has a mind to come my way, let him renounce self, and take up his cross daily, and follow me (Luke 9. 23).

Application

Each one will have to judge what religious practice will help him most to live a more saintly life during these last few days before the great Mystery of our redemption.

II: THE EPISTLE

A: The Priesthood of Christ

The Epistle to the Hebrews, from which this passage is taken, may be truly considered the 'priestly epistle'.

It has for its object to demonstrate the superiority of the priesthood of Christ over that of the Old Law. It is nothing but an uninterrupted exposition of the riches of the sacerdotal grace of Christ and of the great act of that priesthood—the redemptive sacrifice.

Christ: the priest

1. That is the main statement of today's epistle: Christ has taken his place as our high priest, to win us blessings that still lie in the future. . . . Thus, through his intervention, a new covenant has been bequeathed to us (Heb. 9. 11, 15).

2. These are frequently repeated in St Paul: He has been entrusted with a more honourable ministry, dispenser as he is of a nobler covenant, with nobler promises for its sanction (Heb. 8. 6).

There is only one God, and one mediator between God and men, Jesus Christ, who is a man like them (1 Tim. 2. 5).

3. To be a mediator is proper to a priest: The proper office of a priest is to be a mediator between God and man: in as much as he bestows divine things on the people ... and for as much as he offers up the people's prayers to God (3p. q. 22. a. 1. c).

From the moment of the Incarnation

I. The epistle of today shows us Christ, the high priest of the great liturgy of the New Testament (cf. *Exeget. and Moral Notes,* p. 238); but it presents him to us in heaven, where he continues to exercise his office of High Priest and mediator.

2. *This priesthood of Christ began at his Incarnation:*

Priesthood and sacrifice are co-relative terms; and the sacrifice of Christ began in Mary's womb:

(a) As Christ comes into this world he says, No sacrifice, no offering was thy demand; thou hast endowed me instead with a body. Thou hast not found any pleasure in burnt sacrifices, in sacrifice for sin. See, then, I said, I am coming to fulfil what is written of me, where the book lies unrolled; to do thy will, O my God.

(b) In accordance with this divine will we have been sanctified by an offering made once for all, the body of Jesus Christ.

He is a priest for ever

Jesus continues for ever and his priesthood is unchanging (Heb. 7· 24)·

i. It is necessary to distinguish between the oblation of the sacrifice and its consummation.

(a) The latter is only the communication of the good things won for us by the former. It is also a function of the priesthood which Christ continues to perform now, in heaven.

(b) At the end of time the intervention of Christ will cease, but his priesthood will continue:

i. in the dignity it confers upon him;

ii. in the glorious crown of the saints, who have been won for him through his merits;

iii. in the adoration and thanksgiving which Jesus will give for all eternity to the Trinity (3. q. 22. a. 5. c).

(c) This is pre-figured in the action of the high priests of the Old Law, who entered into the Holv of Holies after the sacrifice—so Christ entered heaven. The idea is Pauline.

2. The function of this eternal priesthood is expressed by St Paul: He lives on still, to make intercession on our behalf (Heb. 7. 25).

Consider our High Priest

i. The Christian is, in some way, a priest. If we consider the priesthood of Christ in relation to the Mystical Body it follows that the Christian, a member of Christ, intervenes even in this life in the liturgy which began with the Incarnation and ended at the Ascension. Therefore:

(a) let us seek to give glory to God through Christ, in Christ and with Christ. Our prayers, our sacrifices and our good works, however small, form part of the infinite sacerdotal homage of Christ.

(b) in our Communion we have to live this thought. In it we receive our High Priest. Our heart becomes a sanctuary in which Christ offers himself for us.

2. Our real home is in heaven. There he is. We live with his life. Here are the conclusions which the Apostle draws from this doctrine:

(a) Why, then, brethren, we can enter the sanctuary with confidence through the blood of Christ. He has opened up for us a new, a living approach, by way of the veil, I mean, his mortality (Heb. 10. 19-20).

(b) A great priest is ours, who has dominion over God's house. Let us come forward with sincere hearts in the full assurance of the faith, our guilty consciences purified by sprinkling, our bodies washed clean in hallowed water (Heb. 10. 21-22).

(c) Do not let us waver in acknowdedging the hope we cherish; we have a promise from one w'ho is true to his word (Heb. 10. 23).

3. *As brothers—a Pauline application:*

(a) Let us keep one another in mind, always ready with incitements to charity and to acts of piety (Heb. 10. 24).

(b) If we go on sinning wilfully, when once the full knowledge of the truth has been granted to us, we have no further sacrifice for sin to look forward to; nothing but a terrible expectation of judgement, a fire that will eagerly consume the rebellious (Heb. 10. 26-27).

B: Christ, the Priest

The sacrifice of Calvary

1. Before presenting to us the drama of Calvary the Church, through her liturgy, shows us the priest.

2. Christ on the cross is the Redeemer who satisfies, by offering as a priest, the sacrifice of his life.

The Priest

St Paul's definition: The purpose for which any high priest is chosen from among his fellow-men and made a representative of men in their dealings with God, is to offer gifts and sacrifices in expiation of their sins (Heb. 5. 1).

1. *Chosen from among his fellow-men:*

(a) The priest is the representative of humanity.

(d) Just as a citizen is chosen to act as ambassador for the State which he represents, to treat with another nation on her behalf, so the priest represents mankind before God—this is a social need as well as an individual one.

2. *His vocation comes from God* (Heb. 5. 4):

Nobody may arrogate to himself this duty unless it is offered to him officially.

(a) In the pagan religions the society itself can lay clown rules about the method of choosing its representatives;

(b) but when God founded his religion, both in the Old and the New Law, he himself made these rules and, in some cases at least, has chosen the candidates himself;

(c) he even went so far as to dictate the rites and ceremonies by which the priests were to be consecrated for their office.

3. *In their dealings with God:*

(a) the function of the priest is to represent the people before God;

(b) this function he does principally by means of sacrifice, both in recognition of God's supremacy and the honour we owe him, and also in expiation for sin.

Christ, the priest, fulfils all these conditions

1. *He is chosen from among men:*

(a) Christ is a priest as a man (cf. St Thomas, p. 262);

(b) as God he could not have adored himself;

(c) his incarnation was sufficient of itself to make him a priest, since by it he is the official representative of the human race to which he belongs;

(d) he is the perfect mediator in every order, both ontological and moral.

2. *Instituted by the Father:*

(a) So it is with Christ. He did not raise himself to the dignity of the high-priesthood; it was God that raised him to it when he said: Thou art my Son, I have begotten thee this day; and so, elsewhere, Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech (Heb. 5. 5-6).

(b) This descent from heaven of the Word made flesh was the anointing of his priesthood, verified by God in the temple of the virginal womb of Mary.

(c) Therefore the first act of Christ on beginning to live among us was his first sacerdotal prayer (Heb. 10. 5-7).

2. *To offer gifts and sacrifices for sin:*

(a) Christ brought about the redemption by offering to God a sacrifice which gave him infinite honour;

(b) and at the same time served to expiate our faults, giving him back the honour which we had deprived him of by our sins.

Christ, the only priest

1. Because of his excellence; he is God made man.
2. By his sacrifice—his very life—no other priest offers so much.
3. By the value of his sacrifice—infinite, like himself.

4. Because from now on he will be the principal priest.

(a) Other human priests are his instruments, representing him at the altars on earth; but he who offers the sacrifice to the Father is Christ, in heaven, eternally interceding for us.

(b) From this comes the infinite value of the sacrifice of the Mass and that is why it is always a clean oblation—the stains of the instrument cannot dirty it in any way.

The priesthood of Christians

1. Time was when you were not a people at all, now you are God's people ... (1 Peter 2. 10). You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation . . . *{ibid.* 9). What God said to the Jewish nation St Peter applies to us. We are a priesthood.

2. The function characteristic of the priesthood is the offering of sacrifice. The priest offers it in the name of the people. Therefore the people also is a priesthood, with the priest as their representative.

3. Therefore, when Christ offered his sacrifice on the Cross and when he repeats that offering in heaven at each Mass, we are offering it with him.

4. What is more, God does not now accept as a legitimate sacrifice any other except that offered by Christ and us.

5. *We are priests then, one with Christ:*

Learn, then, O Christian, to know thy dignity: Such was the high priest that suited our need, holy and guiltless and undefiled, not reckoned among us sinners, lifted high above all the heavens (Heb. 7. 26). What then should be the lives of those who are associated with such a high priest?

C: The Sacrifice of Christ

The New sacrifice

Priesthood and sacrifice are correlative. With Christ began a new sacrifice and a new priesthood.

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1. *The sacrifices of the Old Testament were not to God's liking:*

(a) Never a man of you but must be paid to shut door, light altar-fire ... no gifts will I take from such as you.... Beast mangled, beast gone lame, beast that is ailing you present to me, and the bloodless offering with it. And should the Lord of hosts accept the gift you make him? (Malach. 1. 10, 13).

(b) Having said, thou hast not found any pleasure in burnt sacrifices . . . Christ continues: See, then, I said, I am coming to fulfil what is written of me ... to do thy will, O my God (Heb. 10. 6-7).

2. *They were replaced by a sanctifying sacrifice:*

(a) It is foretold in the Old Testament:

No comer of the world from sun's rise to sun's setting, where the renown of me is not heard among the Gentiles, where sacrifice is not done, and pure offering made in my honour; so revered is my name, says the Lord of hosts, there among the Gentiles (Malach. 1. 11).

(b) St Paul affirms it many times:

i. Here are gifts and sacrifices being offered, which have no power, where conscience is concerned, to bring the worshipper to his full growth; they are but outward observances concerned with food and drink. .. . And if such purification was needed for what was but a representation of the heavenly world, the heavenly world itself will need sacrifices more availing still (Heb. 9. 9, 23-24)·

ii. What the law contains is only a shadow of those blessings which are still to come, not the full expression of their reality. The same sacrifices are offered year after year without intermission, and still the worshippers can never reach, through the law, their full growth (Heb. 10. 1).

iii. By a single offering he has completed his work for all time, in those whom he sanctifies (Heb. 10. 14).

Priest and victim (cf. St Thomas, p. 264)

1. *The elements of any sacrifice are:*

(a) the priest and victim;

(b) the immolation of the victim by destruction, either real or equivalent;

(c) the offering made to God by the priest;

(d) to recognize in a visible way God's supreme dominion over all things.

2. *Christ, the priest, died for the sins of the world:*

(a) The blood of bulls and goats, the ashes of a heifer sprinkled over men defiled, has powder to hallow them for every' purpose of outward purification; and shall not the blood of Christ, who offered himself, through the Holy Spirit, as a victim unblemished in God's sight, purify our conscience, and set them free from lifeless observances to serve the living God (Heb. 9. 13-14).

(b) Christ was offered once for all, to drain the cup of a world's sins (Heb. 9. 28).

(c) What was the ransom that freed you . . . you know well enough that it was not paid in earthly currency, silver or gold; it was paid in the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1. 18-19).

(d) Thou, Lord, art worthy to take up the book and break the seals that are on it. Thou wast slain in sacrifice; out of every tribe every language, every- people, every nation thou hast ransomed us with thy blood and given us to God (Apoc. 5. 9).

3. *The death of Christ was a true sacrifice:*

(a) The destruction of the victim:

Of the four elements of a sacrifice the Jews effected one; they killed Christ. The others were realized in Christ himself and by him alone.

(b) Christ is the victim:

i. He gave himself up on our behalf, a sacrifice breathing out fragrance as he offered it to God (Eph. 5. 2).

ii. The sanctuary into which Jesus has entered is not one made by human hands, is not some adumbration of the truth; he has entered heaven itself, where he now appears in God's sight on our behalf. Nor does he make a repeated offering of himself, as the high priest, when he enters the sanctuary, makes a yearly offering of the blood that is not his own. If that were so, he must have suffered again and again, ever since the world was created; as it is, he has been revealed once for all, at the moment when history reached its fulfilment, annulling our sin by his sacrifice (Heb. 9. 24-27).

iii. One high priest after another must stand there, day after day, offering again and again the same sacrifices, which can never take away our sins; whereas he sits for ever at the right hand of God, offering for our sins a sacrifice that is never repeated (Heb. 10. 11-12).

(c) Priest and victim:

i. Christ died because he wished to do so. This my Father loves in me, that I am laying down my life to take it up again. Nobody can rob me of it; I lay it down of my own accord. I am free to lay it down, free to take it up again; that is the charge which my Father has given me (John 10. 17-18).

ii. The last words of Christ on the Cross, spoken with a loud voice (a thing normally impossible in those who died by crucifixion) are regarded by St Thomas as a proof that Christ laid down his life freely: Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit (Luke 23. 46).

iii. By this voluntary giving of his life Christ performed a priestly act at the same time as he made himself the victim of his own sacrifice.

4. *The ends of Christ's sacrifice:*

(a) The value of a sacrifice does not lie so much in sensible things, but in the spiritual things which are contained by them. The spiritual values of sacrifice are:

i. a recognition of the supremacy *of God* and of his dominion over all;

ii. an offering which man makes of his life, his person and his whole sell, which is a consequence of the love and obedience of the victim.

(b) The death oi Christ on the Cross had the same purposes:

i. to give to God the honour which sin deprived him of: I have glorified thee on earth (John 17. 4);

ii. redeem the world from sin;

iii. the interior conditions of him who offered it were his obedience to God together with a great love for God and for his neighbours.

Our sacrifice

There is now no other sacrifice which is acceptable to God except that of Christ. We are incorporated in him. The doctrine of the Mystical Body demands that we unite ourselves with his immolation.

1. That is what the Apostle means when he says: And now, brethren, I appeal to you by God's mercies to offer up your bodies as a living sacrifice, consecrated to God and worthy of his acceptance; this is the worship due from you as rational creatures (Rom. 12. 1).

2. We have to be victims as Christ was. This must be manifested in our small sacrifices and sufferings.

3. Above all, we must have the right dispositions, namely, those which appear in the sacrifice of Christ, obedience and love.

D : The Christian Priesthood

The dignity of the priest

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i. The saints have pondered on this theme many times.

(a) The priesthood is supreme among all created dignities (St Ignatius M.).

(b) The priesthood, even when it is exercised on earth, must be counted among the heavenly things (St John Chrysostom).

(c) The priest is a divine man and his dignity' is divine (St Denis).

2. *Titles to greatness:*

(a) The priestly powers:

St John Chrysostom says: The power of kings is extended only to temporal goods and over the bodies of their subjects, while that of the priests extends over the souls and over spiritual things.

i. *He has power over the physical body of Christ :* He consecrates at Mass and distributes him in Holy Communion. God himself comes down obediently on to the altar whenever he calls him, as often as he calls him, and places himself in his hands, even though

the priest be his enemy. And there he remains, entirely at the disposition of the priest, who moves him from one place to another as he pleases, even enclosing him in the tabernacle, or exposing him on the altar, taking him out of the Church, feeding on him or giving him as food to others (St Lawrence Justinian).

ii. He has power over the Mystical Body of Christ, through the power of the keys, the administration of the sacraments.

(b) The priestly functions:

i. To carry to God the offerings of men, their prayers and sacrifices.

ii. To bring to men what is God's; he is the ambassador of Christ among men and dispenser of the mysteries of God.

(c) He is a continuation of Christ on earth:

Here is the greatest grandeur of the priest.

The priest, another Christ

In the New Law there is only one priest, only one sacrifice—that which is offered daily on our altars, as a reproduction of the sacrifice of Calvary. The priests sacrifice in the name of Christ. Their priesthood is not distinct from his, but identical with it.

1. St Thomas says that in Christ there is no sacerdotal character, he is the origin of all priesthood (3. q. 63. a. 5; a. 50. a. 4).

2. The character is essentially, according to St Thomas, the sacrament of orders.

3. This interior seal is the fundamental greatness of the priest. From it come all his priestly powers.

By it he is made like to Christ and can be called another Christ, or, according to St Cyril of Alexandria, 'the priest is nothing but a figure of Christ'.

Three ways in which the earthly priest is like Christ

1. *His choice:*

The priest is a man chosen from among men by God.

(a) this is the affirmation of St Paul (Heb. 5. 1, 4);

(b) and this gives meaning to the words of Christ: It was not you that chose me, it was I that chose you (John 15. 16);

(c) this election presupposes predilection on the part of God. For that reason it must be the object of thanksgiving on the part of those chosen.

2. *He is a mediator like Christ* (St Thomas, 3. q. 22. a. 1. *ad mm*).

3. *There must also be moral assimilation:*

For this reason the priest must be holy (Heb. 7. 26).

eneration for the priest

1. The people must learn to see in the priest, over and above all his human defects, the person of Christ.

2. They must pray for their priests, look after them, help them in their needs.

3. Consequently they must look after the seminary in which the priests are trained, supporting them by their prayers and almsdeeds.

E: The Priesthood of the Faithful

The faithful and the priesthood

1. This is a theme which is little treated of in sermons, yet very useful for the spiritual life of our people. We need have no fear of it provided we can distinguish clearly in our own minds between the hierarchical priesthood and that of the laity. As Pius XII says: It does not follow, however, from the fact that Christians participate in the eucharistie sacrifice, that they also enjoy the priestly power. It is absolutely essential that you make this quite clear to your faithful *(Mediator Dei).*

2. In dealing with the priesthood of the laity we are talking about a non-hierarchical priesthood.

The priesthood of the faithful

1. *The fact:*

We mean to imply by this that the faithful do participate in a real way (not a merely metaphorical one) in the priesthood of Christ;

(a) that every' baptized person has a real, true priesthood, not a mere metaphorical one;

(b) a liturgical priesthood, not merely internal;

(c) a priesthood with a priestly power and function related to sacrifice.

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2. *Scriptlire:*

(a) Not so you; you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation . . . (1 Peter 2. 9).

(b) Thou hast made us a royal race of priests, to serve God (Apoc. 5. 10).

3. *The Fathers:*

Let St Augustine serve for all the others: he says that the word priest is used not merely to designate the bishops and priests, who are properly so called in the Church, but also just as all are called Christians because of the mystical chrism, so all are called priests because they are the members of a priest, of whom St Peter says' You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood' *(De Civ Dei* 20 10· PL. 41. 676).

4. *The theologians:* St Thomas (cf. pp. 261 ff.)

Now the whole rite of the Christian religion is derived from the priesthood of Christ. Consequently, it is clear that the sacramental character is specially the character of Christ, to whose character the faithful are likened by reason of the sacramental characters, which are nothing else than certain participations of Christ's priesthood, flowing from Christ himself (3. q. 563. a. 3. c).

5. *Papal documents:*

Pius XII: It is not to be wondered at that Christians should be raised up to this dignity. By the waters of Baptism, Christians in the mystical Body, in a way shared by all, become members of Christ the Priest, and through the character that is stamped on their souls they are appointed for divine worship; they have then, in accordance with their state, a share in the priesthood of Christ himself.

The priestly function of the faithful

1. The essence of the priesthood is in its relation to sacrifice.

(a) There is no possibility of a priesthood without sacrifice or of a sacrifice without a priest;

(b) the priestly function in sacrifice is not precisely that of immolation but that of offering. In the Old Testament the office of killing the victims was performed by the people, that of offering them by the priests;

(c) the priesthood of the faithful must, then, bear a relation to sacrifice: You must be a holy priesthood, to offer up that spiritual sacrifice which God accepts through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2. 5).

2. In the present economy there is only one sacrifice which is acceptable to God, that of Christ; therefore the priestly function of the laity must be related to that sacrifice in some way or other; there is here an active, not a merely passive participation.

(a) The immolation is the work of the ministerial priest, who alone can consecrate; in the same way he is the only one who offers in the name and the Person of Christ;

(b) but in this latter the faithful must share, in their rôle as priests.

Testimony of Pius XII: That the faithful offer the sacrifice by the hands of the priest is clearly evident from the fact that the minister of the altar represents Christ is his capacity as Head as he offers in the name of all the members; it is correct, therefore, to say that the whole Church makes the offering of the victim through Christ. The fact that the people offer together with the priest does not, however, mean that the members of the Church carry out the visible liturgical rite in the same way as the priest himself; that belongs solely to the minister who has been appointed

by God for this purpose; it means that they unite their prayers of praise, expiation, impétration and thanksgiving to the prayers and intention of the priest, and even of the sovereign Priest himself, in order that they may be presented, in the very offering of the victim, to God the Father, and by the external rite performed by the priest. For the internal rite of sacrifice, of its nature, must represent the internal worship; now the sacrifice of the New Law signifies the supreme worship by which the principal offerer, who is Christ, and with him and by him all his mystical members, render to God the honour and respect that are due to him *(Mediator Dei).*

The Mass of the faithful

1. *The way of assisting at Mass indicates the formation of the Christian:*

In general it is usual for moral theology to prevail over ascetical theology—i.e. the idea that external attention and bodily presence is the only necessary condition for assisting at Mass. These words are taken so literally that many of the faithful do nothing else.

2. *There should be active assistance:*

(ff) by an offering of the victim together with the priest;

(b) Christ, the priest at the altar and the faithful who assist, should form one body and offer the supreme sacrifice of adoration in that spirit.

3. *They should also offer themselves together with Christ:*

Because every sacrifice is a sign of internal oblation proper to each one offering it. We must offer to God, together with his Son, our lives, our families, our work, our difficulties—everything we have.

F: The One Mediator: Christ Jesus

A mediator: a doctrine insisted on by St Paul

(a) He presents Christ to us as the mediator of a new covenant (Heb. 9. 11 ffi).

(b) There is only one God, and only one mediator between God and men, Jesus Christ, who is a man, like them (1 Tim. 2. 6; cf. Heb. 8. 6).

i. St Thomas presents Christ to us exercising the office of a mediator:

(a) The office proper to a priest:

It is to be a mediator between God and the people . . . Now this is most fitting for Christ. For through him are gifts bestowed on men, according to 2 Peter 1. 4; By whom he hath given us most

great and precious promises, that by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature. . . . Moreover, he reconciled the human race to God, according to Col. 1. 19: in him it hath well pleased (the Father) that all fullness should dwell, and through him to reconcile all things unto himself.

(b) **The unifying function of the mediator:**

i. Now to unite men perfectly to God belongs to Christ, through whom men are reconciled to God. According to 2 Cor. 5. 19 God was, in Christ, reconciling the w'orld to himself;

ii. and consequently, Christ alone is the perfect mediator of God and men, in as much as, by his death, he reconciled the human race to God . . . who gave himself a redemption for all.

iii. However, nothing hinders certain others from being called mediators in some respect betwen God and men, forasmuch as they co-operate in uniting men to God dispositively or ministerially (3. q. 26. a. 1).

2. *Priesthood and mediation:*

Christ is a priest and therefore a mediator.

(a) The priestly office is—to give divine things to man and return man's offerings to God;

(b) the first origin of divine things is God, who showers his gifts upon us through the priest-mediator;

(c) the second origin of these divine things is man, who offers to God his prayers, oblations and, above all, his sacrifice;

(d) the official entrusted with those offerings is the priest-mediator.

Mediator because he is our Head

I. *Christ our head by grace:*

(a) Christ, as man, is the mediator of God and men as it is written, 1 Tim. 2. 5; and hence it behoved him to have grace which would overflow upon others (3. q. 7. a. 1). St Thomas insinuates that, without this grace, Christ would not have been able to join man with God.

(b) He is our mediator because he pleads for us and satisfies for us; both of which he does as our head.

(c) His grace as our head enables him to unite the two extremes, God and man, by means of a vital life-stream between one and the other.

To intercede for us

I. *He is an eternal mediator:*

If his priesthood is eternal and the office proper to a priest is that of mediation it follows that his mediation must also be eternal.

2. *It is active:*

(a) In so far as it produces all those sanctifying effects which come to us through the sacraments.

(b) He prays tor us and offers sacrifices for us:

i. he prayed on earth (cf. John 17) and offered sacrifice for us;

ii. he prays for us in heaven: We have an advocate to plead our cause before the Father in the Just One, Christ Jesus (1 John 2. 1). He lives on still to make intercession on our behalf (Heb. 7. 20-25).

3. *The prayer of Christ before the Father:*

(a) It is sacerdotal intercession, as we can see from St Paul (Heb. 7. 22-25).

(b) He prays to the Father, presenting to him his humanity' in heaven (St Thomas, *Comm, on Heb.* c. 7).

(c) Also by his holy soul, which always manifests to God the desire he had and has for our salvation.

In the Name of Jesus

1. The efficacious nature of the prayer offered in the name of Jesus is infallible. This infallibility has its roots in Christ as our mediator.

2. It is convenient to unite ourselves with Christ expressly in our own prayers. It will increase our confidence to know that we are not alone, he is with us.

3. Whatever you are about, in word and action alike, invoke always the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, offering your thanks to God the Father through him (Col. 3. 17).

II: THE GOSPEL

A: The Figure of Christ

1. *The theme:*

We are concerned with the human picture of Christ as it comes to us from these two chapters of the Gospel, St John, 7 and 8, on this occasion of the Feast of Tabernacles. In synthesis we may say that we discover someone of perfect character.

2. *Prudent when faced with danger and also serene in it:*

(a) Prudent, because he lived far from Jerusalem, since the Jews sought to kill him (John 7. 1).

(b) \\ hen he does go it is not from motives of vanity. The advice given him by his relatives is: This is no place for thee; Go to Judaea, so that thy disciples also may see thy doings (John 7. 4).

(c) Once he has decided that the time has come (7. 8) he goes to Jerusalem, but his prudence leads him to enter the citv in secret (7. 10).

(d) But once the moment had come for him to fulfil his obligation he preaches in the temple—thc most public place of all (7. 14).

(e) And, in spite of the danger, which he knew was there all the time, that they would stone him, he makes the most open proclamations concerning his divinity. The two chapters are a demonstration of his imperturbability in the face of danger.

3. *Immovable before public opinion:*

(a) He does not despise the common people nor their ideas. He accommodates himself to them many times in his methods of preaching; while he tries to correct them at times if they are evil or erroneous. This is seen throughout the whole Gospel.

(b) But when it is a question ofdoing something which is absolutely necessary for his mission :

i. he is not moved by the opinion of his relatives; he awaits his hour;

ii. he takes no notice of the comments of the people: Some said, he is a good man; No, said others, he leads the multitude astray (7. 12). Jesus appears when he thinks fit and talks about that which he knows he must talk about;

iii. the opinions of powerful men leave him cold and make no difference to his attitude : even though he knew that they wanted to kill him (8. 37-38).

4. *Intransigent in his principles:*

(a) Surrounded by enemies, even then he will not compromise with those few who followed him.

(b) To belong to him friendship is not enough nor mere enthusiasm.

(c) It is necessary to admit constantly all his teaching: And now Jesus said to those among the Jews who believed in him; If you continue faithful to my word, you are my disciples in earnest (8. 31).

5. *Truthful:*

1. The cause of this intransigence is his truthfulness.

2. Christ is truthful because he only speaks the truth and that, in his Father's name.

3. Because he insists on it in spite of the powerful, dangerous and decided opposition.

6. *Despiser ofvain glory:*

(a) **He speaks the truth about himself**:

i. when he has to because of his teaching (before Abraham, etc.);

ii. or to defend his mission (I am not possessed).

(b) but:

i. he does not make a move from vanity (the advice of his relatives);

ii. nor does he seek earthly glory (8. 50).

7. *Innocent:*

Can any of you convict me of sin? (8. 46).

8. *Delicate and charitable:*

(a) Christ never appears as a hard man or rough; in spite of these qualities.

(b) Leaving the rest of the Gospel on one side, in these passages alone we find:

i. the parable of the Good Shepherd (to. 1);

ii. the pardon of the woman in adultery' (8. 3);

iii. lastly, to defend himself from the charge of breaking the sabbath he compares the mosaic law, which admitted the possibility' of circumcision on the sabbath, to the help of our neighbour (7. 23).

B: The devil, father of lies

I. *The theme:*

The opposition between the two camps, that of Christ and that of the devil. Christ is the truth (John 14. 6): I am the way, the truth and the life. The devil is the father of lies. Those who follow Christ seek the truth and believe it (John 8. 31); while those who follow the devil love only lies.

2. *Truth and lies:*

(a) Truth consists in this fact, that my words, actions and ideas are in absolute conformity with the object of them as it is in itself.

i. If the idea I have of a thing or person is in reality the same as that thing or person, then it is true.

ii. If my words manifest my ideas exactly, then they are true, and if my deeds are in conformity" with my ideas and with what is right, then they are true.

(b) In opposition to these three classes of truth there are three kinds of lies:

i. when the mind insists on forging for itself ideas which are not in conformity with reality and when this is culpable, then we have the intellectual lie;

ii. when the words used to express our ideas are really contrary to what we think then we have lies in words;

iii. when our works are not in conformity with what is right and with the rule of reason then we have lies in action.

j. *The devil is a liar:*

(a) **Intellectually:**

i. He deceived himself when, induced to it by his pride, he thought himself to be something which he was not.

ii. He had good motives for knowing that he was a creature, vet he wished to be like God.

(b) **In words:**

The temptation of Eve, of our Lord, of us.

i. He is a complete liar in words because he has all the conditions necessary (cf. St Thomas 2-2. q. no. a. 1): the object is false; he has the intention of speaking falsely; the will to deceive.

ii. He is a liar of the worst type, because he intends to do harm to us and to God without any advantage to himself.

(c) **In his works:**

They are all evil and opposed to the law of God and to reason.

4. *He is the father of lies:*

(a) A false imitator of God, he tries to reproduce his evil as God spreads abroad his good. He wishes to fill everything with lies.

(b) Enemy of man and a murderer from the beginning, he wishes to damn us for eternity by using the most powerful of all weapons —lies:

i. he is the father of intellectual lies, heresies, apostasy, with which he loves to divide the Church;

ii. he is the cause of all the errors of mankind in religious matters;

iii. he is the father of lies in words (false teaching) and in actions (sin).

5. *Conclusion:*

(a) It is a lie to imitate Satan; because children are like their fathers.

(b) Those who follow evil are liars; those who are liars soon find themselves plunged in its evil and in death:

i. because he who is the father of lies is a murderer from the beginning (John 8. 44).

ii. Worse than a thief is one who is ever lying, and to no better end may he look forward (Ecclus. 20. 27).

iii. In their speech no truth can be found; their hearts are emptiness, their mouths gaping tombs; flattering is ever on their lips. Thy sentence, O God, Cheat them of their hopes, cast them out in all their wickedness; Lord, have they not defied thee? (Ps. 5. 10-11).

iv. Will you never cease setting your heart on shadows, following a lie? (Ps. 4. 3).

C: Christ and Satan in the Liturgy

Two real and antagonistic persons

1. The Christian is one who chooses Christ and therefore is in the opposite camp to the devil.

2. The Christian begins his life as such in baptism, and never as in that rite does the Church try to make him see his rupture with his old master and the enmity which now exists between them, passing from the state of a captive to that of an armed enemy.

A clear separation

1. From the first the separation is made quite clear; no sooner does the candidate for baptism draw near to the font than the Church exacts from him a renunciation of Satan, enclosed within a double profession of faith in the moral teachings of Christ and the principal dogmas.

(a) If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments: thou shalt love the Lord, thy God . . . and thy neighbour as thyself.

(b) Dost thou renounce Satan?

2. The rest of the baptismal liturgy does nothing more than insist on this.

The light of freedom after the captivity

i. The first part of the liturgy' takes place either outside the Church or at the very door. This first part is almost entirely made up of exorcisms to free the candidate from the power of the devil. We can outline the steps briefly:

(a) the renunciation of Satan;

(b) the prayer to the Father that he will show this person who has spent so much time wandering along the paths of darkness the way of truth and of light;

(c) God is asked to remove the blindness of heart and to break the bonds of Satan;

(d) the salt of wisdom is placed upon his lips.

2. This is the first element of contrast, between the devil and Christ; faith and truth on the part of Christ; blindness and lies on the part of the devil.

The exorcisms

In the name of the Blessed Trinity the devil is admonished to leave the soul and never more to molest it, in this way at least. The sign of the cross is traced on the forehead and the devil is warned again not to violate that holy sign.

From servant of Satan to servant of God

As the solemn montent approaches the devil is once more warned to leave this soul: Go out, unclean spirit, and give place to the living and true God. Go forth, unclean spirit and give place to his Son, Jesus Christ; Go forth, unclean spirit and give place to the Holy Spirit of God.

The great lesson of the baptismal liturgy

1. The great lesson taught us by the baptismal liturgy is the absolute incompatibility between the one who carries on his forehead the sign of Christ, having been made a son of God, and the Devil.

2. Later the devil will try very hard to win back what he has lost, but he can always be defeated by the arms by which he has been vanquished at baptism:

(a) the holy cross;
(b) the doctrine of Christ ;
(c) the memory of, and the presence of, the Trinity in the soul.

3. On our part we must fix this cross ever more firmly on our foreheads:

(a) by practising the doctrine of Christ;
(b) by making ever more intimate and personal this union of the soul with the Trinity, which the liturgy indicates to us from the very first:

i. *in the negative part:* Dost thou renounce Satan? And all his works and pomps ?

ii. *on the positive side :* If thou wouldst enter into life, keep the commandments; thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul and with thy whole mind. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

D : The Law of God

The word of the Lord, the law of God

1. If a man is true to my word, to all eternity he will never see death (John 8. 51).

2. His word is the law of God, perfected and refined by Christ, who taught it, and promulgated it.

3. This law is life for those who follow it and death for those who despise it.

The Teaching of St Thomas

The law is a chastisement for hardened sinners, a teacher of those who wish to take advantage of it and a consolation for the perfect (/». *Ep. ad Roni.* c. 6).

Consolation for the perfect

i. Perhaps the best commentary on this is the whole of Psalm 118: Ah, blessed they, who pass through life's journey unstained, who follow the law of the Lord (v. i).

(a) Blessed in the glory which they will attain through the keeping of that law, in which God himself will help them. It is the 'never see death' of our Lord's promise.

(b) Blessed on earth, because the keeping of the law brings a sweetness to the heart and a peace of conscience which is known only by those who are faithful to its precepts.

2. Love makes a man happy; and the love of God causes a similar happiness, but in a greater degree.

(a) To love God is to fulfil his law.

(b) In their difficulties the perfect know that they are fulfilling the law of love; and to love, nothing is difficult.

A master to those who wish it

1. Attentive to all thy commandments, I go my way undismayed (Ps. 118. v. 6).

(a) The law of God teaches us the way *of* salvation and perfection.

(b) He who submits that law to the judgement of his own reason will never attain that end; but he who follows it is safe.

2. But the law of Christ—unlike the mosaic law—does not limit itself to teaching, because it is the law of grace. Grace makes it both possible and easy to follow the commands *of the law*. The law *of* Christ and his words carry within them the seed of their own fertility; they lead us onwards to ever greater perfection according to the measure in which we hear and do them.

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Chastisement for hardened sinners

1. God's plan was that man should keep the law and grow in perfection until he reaches heaven. But men destroy that plan. The law of grace is changed into the law of justice, life into death, salvation into punishment.

2. Thy curse lies on all who swerve from thy covenant (Ps. n8. v. 2i).

(a) We are not talking now about sin which is a breach of the law. We are referring to the law itself, which accuses and chastises him who refuses to keep it.

(b) It must never be forgotten that he who breaks one of its commandments while keeping the rest is guilty of breaking the whole law (James 2. 10) because he acts against the divine will and loses grace.

3. *The law Itselfaccuses* (Ps. 118. v. 9):

(a) Because the law told us what was right and wrong.

i. The Gentiles knew it only by the light of their natural reason.

ii. We know it through Christ, who has taught it to us from our childhood. The law will accuse us before our own consciences.

(b) We knew what was the will of God and therefore the law will accuse us of insulting that divine majesty.

(c) We have professed it of our own free will. Just as Christ argued against the Jews that it was not he who accused them, but Moses, whose disciples they pretended to be, so at the judgement, he will accuse us through the law, which we have professed willingly.

4. *Conclusions:*

(a) Never let me turn aside from thy commandments (Ps. 118 v. 10). Buried deep in my heart thy warnings shall keep me clear of sin.

(b) Where must we keep the precepts of the Lord ? Undoubtedly, in our hearts. Is the memory not enough ? No, because forgetfulness can wipe them out. Keep them in such a way that they pass into your love and into your actions (St Bernard, *Serm. Vfor Advent}.*

E: Christ speaks as God

1. *Jesus proves his divinity:*

One fundamental truth unites all the verses of today's Gospel: Jesus proves his divinity.

2. The Gospels of the four Sundays of Lent which have preceded this one all speak to us of the divinity of Christ in one way or another :

(a) by the example of his holy life and total victory over Satan (1st Sunday);

(b) through his glorious transfiguration on Tabor (2nd Sunday);

(c) from his affirmation concerning the radical enmity between himself and the devil and the presence of the kingdom which he had come to found (3rd Sunday);

(d) through the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves (4th Sunday).

3. These were facts, but now comes the clear affirmation of Jesus:

(a) The Church wishes us to enter on the disconcerting mysteries of the Passion with the full conviction that Christ is God.

(b) The conduct of the Jews who listened to him sets in magnificent relief the affirmations of Jesus when he says:

i. Can any of you convict me of sin ? (John 8. 46). He has the full conviction of his impeccability which comes to him because he is God.

ii. Such was the high priest that suited our need, holy and guiltless and undefiled, not reckoned among us sinners, lifted

high above all the heavens; one who has no need to do as those other priests did, offering a twofold sacrifice day by day, first for his own sins, then for those of the people. What he has done he has done once for all; and the offering was himself (Heb. 7. 26-27).

(c) He is the giver of eternal fife.

i. Believe me when I tell you this; if a man is true to my word, to all eternity he will never see death (John 8. 51).

ii. When the Jews fail to find anything they can urge against him they take refuge in calumny, calling him a Samaritan, a possessed person, a proud man who says that he can give eternal life, setting himself above Abraham.

iii. Jesus answers: that he is greater than Abraham; that the Patriarch put his trust in him, and as for your father, Abraham, his heart was proud to see the day of my coming; he saw, and rejoiced to see it (John 8. 56-57).

iv. *He claims to be eternal:* The Jews were indignant at this last claim; Jesus answers: Believe me, before ever Abraham came to be, I am.

F: Humility and Christian dignity

Exemplary balance

1. In the scene of today's Gospel we see an exemplary balance between our Lord's affirmations:

(a) he does not seek his own glory';

(b) yet he affirms his supreme dignity;

(c) and presents himself to the Father as one who always seeks the Father's glory.

2. This is the stand the Christian should take up, sincere humility together with the consciousness of his great dignity.

The example of Christ

1. The whole life of Christ is summarized by St Paul in his Epistle to the Philippians (Ch. 2).

(a) In this chapter he tries to put Christ before us as our example showing him to us in his great humiliations and in his great triumph.

(b) The humiliations of the Incarnation, of a life of complete obedience to the will of another, to the point of accepting the ignominy of the Cross; the consequent triumph of his name over every other as a reward he receives from the Father for his works.

2. St Paul has sung the triumph of Christ as never before or since, and we also see him absorbed in contemplation of the humiliations of Christ. He speaks of Jesus, the origin and crown of all faith, who, to win his prize of blessedness, endured the cross and made light of its shame.... All the wealth of Egypt could not enrich him as the despised lot of God's anointed (Heb. 12. 2, 11. 26).

3, *St Leo the Great says:*

(a) The two natures, the divine and the human, without losing their properties, united together in one person; humility rests on majesty, weakness on power, mortality on eternity.

(b) If the Saviour were not true God he would never have provided us with the medicine we need; if he were not true man he would not be our example.

The doctrine of Christ

1. *It is insistent and clear:*

(a) He proposes himself to us as an example of humility and meekness: Learn from me; I am gentle and humble of heart (Matt. **ii**. 29).

(b) On the other hand he makes us lift up our eyes to the dignity of the Father as an example of what ours should be: But you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matt. 5. 48).

(c) For the simplicity of a child is reserved the dignity of heaven (Matt. 18. 3).

2. This doctrine which has its prelude in the Old Testament (cf. Ecclus. 3. 20; 3 Kings 2. 6) is repeated constantly by the Apostles:

(a) Bow down, then, before the strong hand of God; he will raise you up when his time comes to deliver you (1 Peter 5. 6).

(b) Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you (James 4. 10).

The example of the Saints

1. All of them have combined this profound humility with the knowledge of the true Christian dignity and in this they are a perfect reproduction of the life of Christ.

2. They are not cast down by difficulties; instead they find in them a new reason for confidence in God and thus are able to undertake the most difficult and arduous tasks.

(a) The example of our Lady, summed up in her Magnificat (Luke i. 47), is repeated in the life of the Church. We can see it clearly in the life of St Paul:

(b) he recognizes his lowliness as one who has formerly been a persecutor of the Church (1 Cor. 15. 9),

(c) humiliated by the weaknesses of his own body (2 Cor. 12. 7),

(d) but he also enumerates for us his works and the merits of them as well as the extraordinary graces he received from God (2 Cor. 11).

G: Pharisaism

A sin against the truth

1. Christ accused the Pharisees of the gravest sins, but all of them can be reduced to one: pharisaism is, fundamentally, a sin against the truth.

2. This aspect of pharisaism is developed especially in the Gospel of St John, and particularly in this chapter 8, from which today's Gospel is taken.

3. *They are sons of the devil, the father of lies* (John 8. 44):

This accusation is repeated several times in this chapter 8.

(a) If you are the sons of Abraham it is up to you to follow Abraham's example (8. 39).

(b) No, it is your father's example you follow (8. 41).

(c) You belong to your father, that is, the devil . . . when he utters falsehood, he is only uttering what is natural to him; he is all false, and it was he who gave falsehood its birth (8. 44).

In the sin of pharisaism there is a radical turning away from God

1. There is a complacency in this sin which implies that it is committed from malice and purposely (1. 2. q. 78. a. 1).

2. For sin and shame is all their love and liking (Prov. 2. 14). This can also be applied to the hardened sinner.

Contrary conducts

1. *They speak of their own will:*

(a) In the whole of this chapter Christ opposes his way of teaching and acting to that of the Pharisees: They speak of their own will and inclination; he speaks of what he has seen in the Father.

(b) He hides his divine nature and presents to us his human nature, with its intellect and will submissive to the will of God.

i. What I tell the world is only what I have learned from him who sent me (8. 26).

ii. . . . but speak as my Father has instructed me to speak (8. 28).

iii. And he who sent me is with me; he has not left me all alone, since what I do is always what pleases him (8. 29).

2. *They seek their own glory:*

(a) Jesus opposes the end of his life which is to seek the Father's glory, to that of the Pharisees, which is to seek their own glory.

i. How should you learn to believe, you who are content to receive honour from one another, and are not ambitious for the honour which comes from him, who alone is God? (John 5. 44).

ii. Not that i am looking to my own reputation, there is another who will look to it, and be the judge (John 8. 50).

iii. If I should speak in my own honour, Jesus answered, such honour goes for nothing. Honour must come to me from my Father, from him whom you claim as your God (John 8. 54).

(b) He reminds the Pharisees of a triple warning he has given them:

i. no one should call himself master because there is only one master, Christ;

ii. no one should call himself father, because there is only one, God;

iii. no one should call himself doctor, because there is only one doctor, Christ (Matt. 23. 8-10).

The seed

1. The sin of pharisaism is represented by the first seed in the parable of the sower—it fell upon the path and was trodden under foot.

2. The seed is the word of God; it cannot enter into the hearts of the Pharisees because they reject it, as they rejected Christ himself.

3. The first seed stayed on the surface, the earth was too stony to allow it to penetrate. The proud heart, the pharisaical heart is ground for the devil to sow in, not for Christ.

4. Pharisaism, in a word, includes in itself all sin and all vice, because just as the truth has in it all virtues, so lies contain all sin and vice.

H: Does pharisaism still exist in the Church?

Christ attacked pharisaism

1. *In doctrinal discussions:*

(a) St John has several chapters in which there is an open condemnation of the doctrinal aspect of this error (cf. Chs. 5; 6; 7; 8; 10).

(b) St Mark has the same.

2. *In parable form:*

(a) That of the Pharisee and the publican in the temple at prayer (Luke 18. 9-14).

(b) The three parables on divine mercy are directed against the Pharisees (Luke 15).

(c) The parable of the Good Samaritan is directed against the Scribes and the Doctors of the law, most of whom were Pharisees.

(d) That of the rich man and Lazarus, the beggar, was aimed against avarice.

3. *By miracles:*

(a) in the cure of the man with a withered hand (Luke 6. 6-11);

(b) that of the woman who was bent double under her illness (Luke 13. 10-17);

(c) that of the paralytic (Matt. 9. 1-8);

(d) that of the man with dropsy (Luke 14. 1-6).

What is the explanation for this attitude of our Lord?

1. How are we to explain this enmity between Christ and the Pharisees?

2. One might say that the heart of Christ seems different when he is talking to the Pharisees, especially towards the end of his life, than when he is addressing anyone else:

(a) neither against sinners, nor harlots, nor publicans does he show himself so hard as when he is talking about the Pharisees;

(b) against them his anger is implacable.

3. When he utters his terrible sentences against the Pharisees, was he thinking merely of the politico-religious group of his day, or was his vision much wider, taking in pharisaism of all times, and condemning it? After all, this party had much to be said in its favour:

(a) they had fought valiantly against the foreign invaders,

(b) they represented the national spirit,

(c) they also represented the religious tradition of Israel,

(d) the majority of the interpreters of the law were to be found among them,

(e) the majority of the priests were also Pharisees,

(f) they had religious authority in some things, as Christ himself admitted (cf. Matt. 23. 3),

(g) from among them came, even in the time of Christ, notable figures such as Nicodemus, Paul, Joseph of Arimathea, Gamaliel, etc.

Does pharisaism still exist?

1. It is obviously a sin of all ages in history, not merely of one small politico-religious sect of Palestine which would soon disappear. (Surely so much of the space in the Gospels would not have been given to it except for this fact.)

2. We must be accurate: The world condemns as pharisees many pious people, and the world is wrong. However, although the Pharisees of the Gospels may not exist any more, there are traces of pharisaism still in existence.

3. There are people whose religion is ostentation. They act, always, so as to be a mark for men s eyes. Boldly written are the texts thev

carry, and deep is the hem of their garments; their heart is set on taking the chief places at table and the first seats in the synagogue (Matt. 23. 5-6).

4. There are still those who are quick to judge others, to take scandal from all they do.

(a) He is talking blasphemously (Matt. 9. 3).

(b) Look, thy disciples are doing a thing which it is not lawful to do on the sabbath (Matt. 12. 2).

(c) His disciples were plucking the ears of corn and eating them, rubbing them between their hands. And some of the Pharisees said to them, Why arc you doing what it is not lawful to do on the sabbath (Luke 6. 1-2).

5. There are others who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel (Matt. 23. 24). Those who seem to have a most delicate conscience in one commandment, but a lax one (if they have any at all) in other and graver matters.

6. Those of the religion of the 'cummin' mentioned by our Lord in Matthew 23. 23, who are relatives of those we have just mentioned.

7. Those who despise others as if they were greater and better than all others.

(a) Thus Simon despised the poor sinful woman who knelt at our Lord's feet, bathing them with her tears (Luke 7. 36-49).

(b) Such were those mentioned by St Luke in Chapter 18, and against whom our Lord pronounced the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican.

(c) The fault of Simon is repeated by some pious women who look down on others who have fallen and whose heart is hardened against such poor sinners in a most pharisaical way. At heart they are comparing those sinners with themselves.

i. On the one hand there is a comparison with their own honest way of life, which reveals a pride which cannot be pleasing to Christ.

ii. It does not enter the heads of these pious individuals that the poor women who have sinned much may also have loved much and had much forgiven them.

iii. They also forget that they arc not made of any better clay than these poor unfortunates.

8. There are others who hide their lack of pity beneath a cape of religion.

9. Others keep apart from the poor and the miserable, refusing to help those in trouble and distress:

(a) Here is a man, they said, that entertains sinners, and eats with them (Luke 15. 2).

(b) The priest and the Levite of the parable of the Samaritan.

(c) This form of pharisaism has done immense harm to the Church.

(d) Pius XII says of the poor 'they have not been sufficiently loved'.

Remedies against this evil

1. There is only one—to study and imitate the divine Person of Christ in all things. The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, well understood and applied in our lives, is an efficacious remedy against this evil.

2. To achieve it we need to study Christ as he is in the Gospels.
   (a) meditate on his words and actions,
   (b) study his virtues, so opposed to the vice of pharisaism:
      i. his truthfulness;
      ii. his humility;
      iii. his love for the poor and for those in difficulty or in distress.

Palm Sunday

THE ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: Phil. 2. 5-11. Gospel: Matt. 21. 1-9 (cf. Mark 11. 1-10; Luke 19. 29-40; John 2, 12-19)

Some texts concerning honour and glory

1. *The honour which comes from men is not worth prizing:*

Envy not the wrong-doer his wealth and state; beyond all expectation of thine it shall come to ruin. Ecclus. 9. 16.

Do not boast of thy fine craftsmanship, and then, intimeofurgent need, stand idle; better fall to work and have a full belly than keep thy pride and go fasting. Ecclus. 10. 29-30.

This, too, is the Lord's message: Never boast, if thou art wise, of thy wisdom, if thou art strong, of thy strength, if thou art rich, of thy riches; boast is none worth having, save that insight which gives knowledge of me . . . Jer. 9. 23-24.

Be sure you do not perform your acts of piety before men, for them to watch; if you do that, you have no title to a reward from your Father who is in heaven. Matt. 6. 1.

With you it must be otherwise; whosoever would be a great man among you, must be your servant, and whoever has a mind to be first among you, must be your slave. Matt. 20. 26. Cf. Luke 22. 26.

Knowing, then, that they meant to come and carry him off, so as to make a king of him, Jesus once again withdrew on to the hillside all alone. John 6. 15.

Not that I am looking to my own reputation; there is another who will look to it and be the judge. John 8. 50.

They valued their credit with men higher than their credit with God. John 12. 43.

You must never act in a spirit of factiousness or of ambition; each of you must have the humility to think others better men than himself. Phil. 2. 3.

We have never asked for human praise, yours or another's. 1 Thess. 2. 6.

2. *The true honour:*

Well may he boast that keeps clear of strife; every fool will be quarrelling. Prov. 20. 3.

Speech uttered was ever the wise man's passport to fame; the fool's undoing. Ecclus 5. 15.

Plume not thyself when thou goest bravely clad, nor pride thyself in thy brief hour of greatness. Of wonder and of praise what else is worthy, but the doings of the Most High ? Ecclus. 11.4.

. . . and among our people the wise man wins an inheritance of honour, a deathless renown. Ecclus. 37. 29.

3. *The true glory:*

Do not be disturbed, then, when a man grows rich, and there is no end to his household's magnificence; he cannot take all that with him when he dies, magnificence will not follow him to the grave. Ps. 48. 17-18.

. .. and the wise shall win renown ; only to their shame are fools exalted. Prov. 3. 35.

The gifts I (Wisdom) bring with me are riches and honour, princely state and the divine favour. Prov. 8. 18.

It is the fear of the Lord teaches the lessons of wisdom; humility goes first, and honour comes in her train. Prov. 15· 33·

As well snow in summer or rain in harvest, as honour paid to a fool. Prov. 26. I.

Pride will come low; honour awaits the humble. Prov. 29. 23.

To fear the Lord is man's pride and boast, is joy, is a prize proudly worn; comfort it brings to the heart, happiness and content and a long life bestows. Ecclus. 1. 11-12.

For riches and for renown, as for the lowly born, there is one boast worth having, the fear of God. Ecclus. 10. 25.

The man who delivers a message of his own seeks to win credit for himself; when a man seeks to win credit for one who sent him, he tells the truth, there is no dishonesty in him. John 7. 18.

There will be glory and honour and peace for everyone who has done good. . . . Rom. 2. 10.

It is our boast, made in all good conscience, that we have behaved in the world, and towards you especially, with single-heartedness and sincerity in God's sight, not using human wisdom but the light of God's grace. 2 Cor. 1. 12.

Your lot will be a blessed one, if you are reproached for the name of Christ; it means that the virtue of God's honour glory and power, it means that his own Spirit is resting upon you. 1 Peter 4. 14.

4. *In all things we must seek the glory of God:*

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name . . . Matt. 6. 9.

I have exalted thy glory on earth, by achieving the task which thou gavest me to do. John 17. 4.

It is the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of our forefathers, who has thus brought honour to his Son, Jesus. You

gave him up, and disowned him in the presence of Pilate, when Pilate's voice was for setting him free. Acts 3. 13.

And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, for not referring the glory to God; and he was eaten up by worms and so died. Acts 12. 23.

A great price was paid to ransom you; glorify God by making your bodies the shrines of his presence. 1 Cor. 6. 20.

In eating, in drinking, in all that you do, do everything as for God's glory. 1 Cor. 10. 31.

Whatever you are about, in word and action alike, invoke always die name of the Lord Jesus Christ, offering your thanks to God the Father through him. Col. 3. 17.

SECTION IL GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LITURGICAL

To examine all the liturgical vicissitudes of the ceremony for the blessing, distribution and procession with palms which is characteristic of this Sunday would take us beyond the scope of this work. However, it is useful for the preacher to know the symbolism and the principal elements of that ceremony. There are two main phases in the liturgy of today; the first, that of the blessing and procession with palms, is joyous; the second, comprising the Mass in which the Passion is read, is sad, and speaks to us of penance.

A: The blessing of the palms and the procession

The procession takes place in memory of our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Up to a few years ago the ceremony of blessing of the palms (which did not exist originally) was too long and prolix, coming as it did from the Gallican liturgy.

The procession itself dates from the fourth century, and began in Jerusalem itself. At various times different customs were observed; thus, according to Dom Guéranger, in the Middle Ages it was held in the churches with great solemnity and copies of the Gospels were carried in representation of Christ. In England and Normandy in the eleventh century, as a reaction against the heresy of Berengarius, the Eucharist was carried in procession on Palm Sunday, together with the palms. However, it is always held in memory of Christ's entry into Jerusalem. At the same time we may see in it a vestige of the national procession in Rome and also of the Sunday processions held in the Benedictine abbeys in the Middle Ages before Mass.

When the procession reached the church the doors were found to be shut and one choir from within answered the choir from outside in the chanting of the hymn *Gloria Lans*. Then three blows were given on the door with the butt of the cross and the procession entered.

All commentators see in this a symbol of the Church triumphant in heaven (the choir inside the Church) and the victory of Christ, who, by his passion and death, opened for us all the gates of heaven.

B: The Mass

The whole Mass from the Introit to the Communion antiphon, speaks to us of the Passion of our Lord. David, St Paul and St Matthew each in his turn narrate the sorrows and passion of Christ. During the reading of the Gospel the faithful stand with their palms in their hands, as a symbol of the fact that they are soldiers of Christ, ready and willing to fight his battle to the end, and to suffer for him if necessary.

II. EXEGETIC .AND MORAL NOTES

A: The Epistle: Phil. 2. 5-11

I. *Occasion and history:*

The reason for the choice of this portion of St Paul's epistles is obvious, for not merely does it give us a synthesis of the two sentiments of joy and passion which mark this Sunday, but also those of the whole week. If the Church seems to sink into a dismal silence on the last three days of Holy Week, repeating, almost to herself, the words: an obedience which brought him to death, death on a cross (Phil. 2. 8); yet she will ring her bells with joy on the following Sunday and sing the hymn of glory to the conqueror whose name is so great that 'everything in heaven and on earth and under the earth must bend the knee' before it (Phil. 2. 10).

The historic occasion which inspired these verses was the situation of St Paul's disciples at Philippi, faithful friends of the Apostle, who writes to them from prison. It would appear that one of their defects, if not the principal one, was a certain sense of egoism which did not allow them to achieve complete unity. Even Evodia and Syntyche merit a warning from St Paul on this point *{ibid.* 4. 2).

For this reason the Apostle insists so much on the needs for humility, and, at the beginning of Chapter 3, he places before them the strongest of ail motives, the example of the Word of God, who not merely did not seek honours, but even went to the extent of giving up those to which he had a right, in order to accept the cross, with which he merited his glory.

2. *The texts:*

This epistle is one of those jewels of Pauline theology which one finds so frequently in his writings. The nature of this work obliges us to go deeper into the moral aspect of this doctrine rather than the dogmatic. As we have already said, St Paul's intention is to teach humility, a humility' which will prescind from all attempts

to over-reach others in worldly honours, or from all place-seeking of any kind. Let him who seeks honours and pride of place look to Christ, who renounced them all. The dogmatic sense of this passage, then, is concerned with the concealing of the divine honour and majesty beneath the dress of the humanity of the Word of God.

The section we are studying may be divided into several parts. First we find a parenthesis, then a part which refers to the glory of the Word; then another in which the Apostle shows how little Christ tried to live up to that glory; a fourth which describes the 'annihilation', and, finally, the glory given him by his Father.

The Parenthesis

1. *Yours is to be the same mind which Christ Jesus showed:*

What were these thoughts or affections of which St Paul speaks ? Perhaps the best explanation is given by the Apostle himself in the previous verses: If anything is meant by encouragement in Christ, by loving sympathy, by common fellowship in the spirit, by feelings of tenderness and pity, fill up my cup of happiness by thinking with the same mind, cherishing the same bond of charity, soul knit to soul in a common unity of thought. You must never act in a spirit of factiousness, or of ambition; each of you must have the humility to think others better men than himself (Phil. 2-3).

To think with Christ or against Christ—that is the dilemma. To think with Christ is to carry about the seal of the 'let them be one' (John 17. 11), all having the same thoughts, affections and feelings; to think with Satan is to live among enmities and jealousies.

The causes of such opposed ways of life must also be opposed; therefore since the party spirit is bred from vain-glory, thinking oneself to be superior to others, it is logical that the Christian unity he recommends will have for its foundation humility and charity.

This doctrine is confirmed by two quotations from St Paul's letter to the Corinthians, in the first of which he attributes the desire they have to convert themselves into judges of their fellows to a lack of humility. If they would only learn that, of themselves, they have nothing, then they would not slight one another (1 Cor. 4. 6-8). In the second passage this doctrine on unity is taken to its ultimate causes: Charity is patient, is kind; charity feels no envy; charity is never perverse or proud, never insolent; does not claim its rights . . . (1 Cor. 13. 4-5). Thus the Word of God, instead of seeking honours, humbled himself, under the influence of love, which took him as it were out of himself to think only of us.

2. *Christ's motives:*

The humiliation and the reward of Christ, whose steps we are about to follow:

His nature is, from the first, divine, and yet he did not see, in the rank of Godhead, a prize to be coveted . . . (Phil. 2. 6). We may

notice, in passing, the present tense, which indicates a previous existence opposed to another which he received later. In spite of being God, Christ did not consider the divine honours so much of a prize that they had to be defended at all costs—that is St Paul's idea in this passage, even though some Latin writers have been led away by the \'ulgate word 'robbery' to give another meaning to this passage. The divine honour implied here is obviously the external worship due to God. The lesson is clear also; St Paul is trying to show the Philippians (and us) that Christ was disinterested enough to renounce his divine honours externally when he came into this world, while we insist on maintaining at all costs our position, opinion, dignity', even in petty' matters.

3. *The humiliation:*

(a) He dispossessed himself:

The Apostle can find no other words so descriptive of the distance between the divine and the human. There is, of course, no indication that Christ was not God all the time, even in the Incarnation, quite the opposite. What follows does not make sense unless he is God as well as man. Having dispossessed himself, taking our human nature, the humiliation still continues, because he makes himself obedient unto death, unto the death of the cross.

(b) Took the nature of a slave:

Beginning to be voluntarily something else other than what he was before, becoming fashioned in the likeness of men, and presenting himself to us in human form *{ibid.* 7). With reason St Augustine could say: If you wish to find the way of truth and to know what is the first principle in the knowledge and religion of Christ, I shall tell you that it is humility. If you ask me for the second principle I shall say humility; and should you ask me for the third, humility; and as often as you ask me I shall answer in the same way.

4. *The conclusion:*

Because of all this God has given him an authority which is far and away above any other; just as, by that wonderful union of the two natures in one Person the Word could be said to die, so the man-Christ has become worthy of all honour, and receives the name of Lord or God. From now on it is the Father's will that, since Christ lived in poverty' at Bethlehem, was hidden away in Nazareth, and died on the Cross, now all creation shall bow the knee to him and recognize him for what he is, the Lord God.

We shall limit ourselves to pointing out that the word 'name' here means dignity or office. The use of the word 'Lord' here is a clear proof that St Paul is speaking of the Godhead, since the Jews did not use the name of God, Yaweh, but instead spoke about 'the Lord'.

B: The Gospel: Matt 21. 1-9

I. *The history:*

(a) The month of Nisan had arrived, the month of the Pasch, about the 20 or 22 March, when the caravans from Galilee usually filled the roads leading to Jerusalem. Jesus, too, begins his journey. At first the disciples arc a little afraid and astonished at his decision to go there (Mark 10. 32-34). However, little by little the miracles once more draw the crowds and the fear disappears. He cures two blind men at the gate of Jericho and, after a meal in the house of Zaccheus, makes his way towards Bethany, the last stage of the journey. One word or gesture from him and perhaps those who are now asking for the first places in the kingdom for their sons and crying 'blessed is he that cometh . . .' will cry out in rage against Caesar. They do not do so because Christ does not speak the word. What he does do is to warn the disciples that, before the kingdom can come at all the people must cry out, We will not have this man for our king (Luke 19. 14).

At length he reaches Bethany, famous now because of Lazarus, and the two armies are face to face, that of Christ and that of the Jews.

(b) Palm Sunday:

According to St Mark, Christ must have entered Jerusalem in the evening, which calculation allows time for all the events to take place, because it is not likely that the sabbath would allow time for the spies to return from Bethany and the fresh assembly of the Jews to be called.

In the capital, on the morning of Sunday, having learnt from their spies what was happening at Bethany, the Jews decided that something would have to be done, even if it meant killing Lazarus too (John 12. 10). However, they would wait until the feast days were over and the enthusiastic inhabitants of Galilee had left (Matt. 26. 5).

Meanwhile no more opportune circumstances could have been imagined to produce a messianic outburst than those which were being produced in Bethany: the Galileans, Lazarus, the ritual entry into the city, the Master for whom the centuries had been waiting.

About midday the caravan begins to move and there is no need for more than one spark to kindle the tinder, a spark which the Lord himself provides by sending for his mount, a thing most unusual in him. The Apostles hurry to obey his command and they themselves, once they have reached the slopes of Mt Olivet, lead the cheers and cries, laying down their garments before Christ as he passes. The assembled Galileans take it up and it goes from mouth to mouth. It is the biblical cry expressing the anxiety for the Messias: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Others shout Hosanna! and others, Hosanna for the Son of David! Those who

are in Jerusalem come out to meet those who arc approaching, and the two processions form one. It crosses the brook Cedron and enters into the city'. For centuries the prophets had awaited this moment. See where thy king comes to greet thee, a trusty deliverer; see how lowly he rides, mounted on an ass, patient colt of patient dam (Zach. 9. 9).

There was, however, one episode which the majority could not understand. There among the olive groves overlooking the city, Jesus wept. The tears of God at the thought of the graces which men waste.

2. *The texts:*

(a) When they were near Jerusalem:

Why did Christ choose to make his entry' into the city in this way?

i. So that, by uniting pomp with humility, he might convince the Jews, by means of the former, that he was that king announced by the prophets, while, with the latter, he would demonstrate to them the kind of kingdom he had come to found.

ii. To make us understand with what joy he is going to his death which, a little while before, he had announced yet again (Luke 18. 32-33), and also that it is a glorious thing to do the will of the Father.

iii. To teach us to despise the glories of this world and its honours, which can so quickly change from *Hosanna* to *Crucify him !*

iv. That above all we may recognize him as our king, which he is, and see him riding ahead of his subjects, following him in the midst of honours without taking too much notice of them, until we reach the cross which was the centre of his life. Are we ready for that, we who are so disturbed at the thought of even a small evil?

(b) and had reached Bethphage . . .

About half way from Bethany to Jerusalem, situated on the slopes of the mount of Olives, the name of which means *the house of green*

(c) Jesus sent two of his disciples . . .

As was usual; which gave rise to the comment: that patience and charity might go hand in hand.

(d) Go into the village . . .

There is no need to go into the many allegories which have come in the past from these words. The village was almost certainly that mentioned above.

(e) the first thing you will find there will be a she-ass tethered . . .

Not without reason our Lord gave many examples and proofs

during these days of his prophetic knowledge. Today it is the animals, on another occasion a few days later it will be the upper room for the Last Supper. The hard blow which the Passion will mean for the Apostles made this necessary. Now they did not understand, but later, when they were more tranquil, they would remember all this and would know that he had gone willingly to a death of which he already knew all the details.

(f) and a foal at her side . . .

St Luke gives the added detail that no man had as yet ridden the colt, which justifies the taking of the mother as well, so that the colt would walk along quietly behind her.

The Fathers have seen in this the image of the Jewish nation (the she-ass walking ahead) and the Gentiles, (the colt) who, although as yet untamed, still were the ones who received our Lord.

(g) the Lord has need of them . . .

The words which follow, 'and he will let you have them without more ado,' may easily refer also to the Lord, the sense being that he will return them at once. The owner might have been a friend of the Master, and such is indeed implied in the remark. The interesting thing, however, is the fact that the Lord says he has need of these animals. Commenting on this need Christ has of his creatures Dehaut says: The Lord has need of us ... as the light has need of the darkness, the refreshing fountain of the thirsty traveller, as medicine needs the sick, the rich benefactor of the poor. It is the necessity of love which demands a chance to extend itself, communicate itself and its benefits.

(h) all this was ordained to fulfil the word of the prophet...

After the events of the Passion the Apostles realized what all these things meant. For us this fulfilment of the ancient prophecies is a secondary consideration, because we have, as our proof, the miracles of Christ, but to the Jews who lived for so any centuries in the atmosphere of Old Testament prophecy, they were—and possibly still are—of prime importance.

(i) Tell the daughter of Sion . . .

St Matthew quotes from memory according to the LXX version. The real text reads: See where thy king comes to greet thee, a trusty deliverer; see how' lowly he rides, mounted on an ass, patient colt of patient dam (Zach. 9. 9). The phrase, Tell the daughter of Sion, probably came to his mind through a passage of Isaias which begins in that way (Isaias 62. 11).

Zacharias speaks only of the ass, the phrase, On a colt whose mother has borne the yoke, is an example of the usual parallelism of the Hebrew literature.

Just, a Saviour and a peacemaker—such is our King, and how much it costs us to follow him in his peace, so prone are we to acclaim the kings of this world in their splendour!

(j) and saddled them with their garments . . .

It would appear the natural thing to do, but at the same time it is clear that the Apostles saw in this demand of Christ for a beast on which to ride, the beginning of a triumphal entry into Jerusalem since the short distance did not justify such a thing.

(k) and bade Jesus mount. . .

The picture takes shape. Jesus mounted; the crowds before him and behind him in solemn procession, to hail the Prince of Peace.

This is he of whom the prophets spoke, the King of heaven and earth, to whose service we must consecrate ourselves. A king who comes to you to give himself to you and to take you to himself! The Just One, whose justice is founded on wisdom and sanctity, the fountain of both virtues. Just, when the moment comes, but until then the meek and humble Saviour in his life and death.

(l) while others strewed the way with branches cut down from the trees . . .

Customs which we repeat today in the blessing of the palms and which took place frequently in the Old Testament on solemn occasions (cf. 1 Kings 9. 13). It should be for us a symbol of the affections of our hearts which we lay at our Lord's feet We are part of his Passion, we must also form part of his glory in heaven.

(m) Hosanna!

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The simple Long live the King, with which we are so familiar. Hosanna in the highest merely implies that heaven is invited to join in the Messianic triumph on earth.

SECTION III. THE FATHERS

I. ST AUGUSTINE

(The treatises 51 and 52 of his commentary' on St John deal with the events of Palm Sunday. The main theme is the necessity of the Passion in order to reach the glory of Easter. We shall give a summary of his doctrine with an occasional direct quotation. Cf. PL. 35, 1764 if.)

A: The Passion—the road to glory

1. *The scene on this Sunday:*

Having explained in his own way the symbolism of the palms (signifying the triumph of Christ over death and the devil), St

Augustine begins by pointing out that: Christ, eventhough he was the master of humility, who 'lowered his own dignity, accepted an obedience which brought him to death, death on a cross', does not lose the divinity when he teaches us this virtue, since in that divinity he is equal to the Father and in the humanity he is like us. By that which made him equal to the Father he created us that we might exist; by that in which he is like us he redeemed us, that we might not perish.

2. *Through the Passion to his glory:*

On arriving at the temple, while the jealous priests were gnashing their teeth, two Gentiles approached, desirous of seeing and talking to Christ. Our Lord says: The time has come now for the Son of man to achieve his glory. Some might understand this to mean that the Son of man saw his glory in the fact that the Gentiles wished to approach him, but that is not the true meaning. In that moment he saw all the Gentiles of the whole world believing in him after his passion and death and resurrection ... taking advantage of these two who desired to talk with him he announces the glory which is to come; once that has been verified in heaven then the Gentiles will also believe in him.

But it was convenient that the humility of the passion should precede his glorification, and therefore at once he adds: Believe me when I tell you this; a grain of wheat must fall into the ground and die, or else it remains nothing more than a grain of wheat; but if it dies, then it yields rich fruit (John 12. 24). He was speaking of himself. He was the grain of wheat which had to die to multiply itself; to die in the infidelity of the Jews and to multiply himself in the faith of the nations.

3. *Love and hatred of oneself:*

Christ gives the reason for this: He who loves his life will lose it; he who is an enemy to his own life in this world will keep it, so as to live eternally *{ibid.* 25). St Augustine gives the sense of this passage: 'He who loves his soul—let it be understood in this world—he will certainly lose it; but he who hates his soul in this world, will keep it for eternal life. What a great and wonderful phrase is this, that love for one's own soul will lose it and hatred will not! If you love badly then what you do is hate; if you hate well, you love. Happy are they who keep their soul, hating it, so as not to lose it by love.'

4. *Imitate Christ:*

(a) The reward promised by Christ:

If anyone is to be my servant, he must follow my way; so shall my servant too be where I am. If anyone serve me my Father will do him honour *{ibid.* 26).

(b) The service of Christ and charity:

They serve Christ who do not seek their own good but his. . .. He is a servant of C.hrist who not only does corporal works of mercy, but also any service for him. . . .

Do not think that this is something reserved for the bishops and the priests, because you also, in your own way, serve Christ by living well, giving alms, teaching his name and doctrine to those to whom you are able to teach it, and especially parents, who should understand their obligations towards their families. Let them advise, teach, correct them for Christ's sake and for eternal life; let them be benevolent and severe, let them act in their homes as bishop and priest, being servants of the Lord in order to live always with him.

5. *Human weakness in tribulation:*

(a) And now my soul is distressed (John 12. 27):

How is it that your soul is distressed, my Lord, when only a moment ago you have told us that he who hates his soul in this world keeps it for life eternal? Do you now love it, so that the approach of death distresses you? Who would dare to say such a thing of the Lord? It is not that anything distressed him; but he distressed himself, as happened at the resurrection of Lazarus (John 11. 33). It was convenient that our one mediator between God and man, the man, Christ Jesus, who raised us to the heights, should also suffer the lowest things for us.

(b) *Support in weakness:*

On what can I rest if my very foundations are sinking through? But it would seem that he has heard my thought and answers me at once: You will follow me the more easily, because thus I shall place myself between you and your sufferings. You have heard the voice of my strength; now listen to that of your weakness. I encourage you to run; I do not impede your speed; what I do is to assume your fear and smooth your path. O Lord and Mediator! God above all, made man for us, I know' your mercy, since you, being so great, are distressed, moved by charity, in order to console us, your members, those who are distressed by the weakness of their flesh.

B: The vanity of seeking praise

1. *How to live free from vanity in the midst of this world:*

St Augustine asks himself this question and his answer is: By the mere fact that our life is there, where the truth is, it will not be lived here in this world, where all is vanity. Christ is the truth.

2. *The important thing is our intention in doing any good work:*

We must know not only that our works are good, but principally if the end for which we do them is good. In this sense at least we can turn our eyes away from the vanity of this world, which looks

first of all for human praise, and through which so many of those who are called great have been motivated in the past. They sought their glory in men, not in God. They lived in strength, moderately and justly; but at the hour of reward they received their just merits: to the vain, vanity.'

3. *Human praise is not evil of itself:*

But the inordinate desire of it is. 'It is not that human praise is evil (what more could we wish than that men should be pleased by our good example), but it is evil to do good, looking for such praise, for that is nothing more than to seek vanity in all our works.'

4. *All praise must be referred to God:*

'When the praises of men rain upon the just, he should not be satisfied with them as if they were an end in themselves, but should refer them to God, thanks to whom the good do good works. . . .'

5. *The grace of God is necessary always:*

To think that we ourselves are capable, without the grace of God, of separating our gaze from vanity is itself great vanity, as it is to think that we can become just and good without it.

II. ST BERNARD♦

A: The Glory of this world compared with true Glory

1. *The glorious procession and passion of the Lord:*

Not without good reason, my brethren, has the Church, animated as she is by the spirit of her bridegroom and her God, added today, in a novel and wonderful combination, a solemn procession to the reading of the passion. I call this a novel and wonderful combination, because whereas the procession is triumphant and accompanied with songs of joy, the passion is provocative of tears and laments . .. let us see what lessons this has for both classes of men. And we must examine first of all what it suggests to worldlings. . . .

2. *The world's joy turned to tears:*

Accordingly, let the worldling consider and understand that, Mourning taketh hold of the end of joy (Prov. 14. 13). It was indeed to impress this truth upon us that he who in all other things likewise, began to do and to teach (Acts 1. 1), preached by example as well as by word : it was for this purpose, I say, that he, when made visible in the flesh, was at pains to prove clearly in his own person, what long before he had announced through his prophet: All flesh is grass and all the glory thereof as the flower of the field (Isaias 40. 6). If then he received the honour of a triumphal procession it was

♦ Taken from three sermons on the procession of palms, all expressing the the same basic theme.

because he knew that the day of his ignominious passion was at hand. \\ ho ought now to put his hope in the inconstancy of temporal glory, when even in the Author of time and the Creator of the universe he beholds so great a humiliation after so great an exaltation. For in the same city, in the same week, Christ was one day received with a glorious procession and divine honours, and on another subject to insult and torture. . . .

3. *The passion: the path to heaven:*

I want you to see in the procession an image of the glory of our heavenly home and in the passion the way that leads thereto... If, I say, you have thus suggested to you in the procession the term of our pilgrimage, behold also marked out for you in the passion the way which leads to that end For present tribulation is the way to life, the way to glory, the way to the holy city, the kingdom of God, according to the testimony of the thief on the cross, who said, Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom. He beheld Christ on his way to his kingdom and begged to be remembered by him when he arrived there. Thither came also the thief as a result of his prayer; and by how short a journey' you may judge by the fact that he was deemed worthy to be with Christ in paradise that very day. Thus the glory of the procession renders the passion easy to endure, because nothing appears difficult to the soul that loves.

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B: Moderation in joy and sadness

I. *Procession and passion . . .joy that ends in sadness:*

There is a special fitness in this combination of the passion and the procession, because it teaches us not to rest with any security' upon the pleasures of this world by showing us how Mourning taketh hold of the end of joy (Prov. 14. 13). Therefore, my dearest brethren, let us not be like fools who are destroyed by their prosperity, but in the day of good things, let us be not unmindful of evils, or in the day of evils, unmindful of good things (Ecclus. 11. 27). For the present life consists of an alternation of good and evil, as well in the case of spiritual as worldly persons. Thus we see the men of the world sometimes elated by good fortune and sometimes cast down by adversity; and pious souls, likewise, are neither always in gladness nor always in gloom, but experience a succession of bright days and dark.... But this condition of things shall endure only as long as time lasts, or rather as long as the stream of time continues to flow.

2. *Temperance in joy and sorrow:*

(a) The difference between earth and heaven:

This present world of time shall be succeeded by two other worlds widely diverse and remote one from the other. In the one there

shall be nothing but weeping and gnashing of teeth; in the other nothing but thanksgiving and the voice of praise (Isaias 51.3).... In this life, however, neither the lovers of the world are allowed to live without suffering many diversities, nor even with the servants of God does everything fall out in accordance with their wishes.

(b) Rules:

In the days of evil the just are mindful of good things, lest otherwise they should become pusillanimous and impatient. . . and they are also mindful of evils in the day of good things, lest they should grow proud and begin to say: in their abundance I shall never be moved (Ps. 29. 7). For just as his worldly prosperity destroys the worldly fool (Prov. 1. 32), so too may his spiritual abundance and prosperity destroy the spiritual person who is lacking in knowledge and therefore not spiritual at all. . . . But how is it that prosperity ruins the fool and not the wise man? We find the answer in Ecclesiastes, where it is written: The heart of the wise is where there is mourning, and the heart of fools where there is mirth (Eccles. 7. 5).

(c) The example of the Lord:

Here also we have the reason why the Lord willed to give us an example of humility in his procession as well as that of patience in his passion. In the passion he was led as a sheep to the slaughter and was dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he opened not his mouth (Isaias 53. 7). When he suffered he threatened not (1 Peter 2. 23), but rather prayed for his enemies. . . . But what lesson does he give us in his procession? The people were prepared to go forth to meet him, nor was he ignorant of their purpose, for he knew what was in man (John 1. 25). Therefore too he made his preparations, and presented himself to them, not with horses and chariots, not with silver-mounted bridles and gilded caparisons, but seated on the back of an ass's colt whereon the Apostles had laid their garments, which I do not suppose were of the most costly material used in that country.

3. *Four classes of persons who follow Christ:*

Coming now to the procession, it seems to me that wre can discern therein four distinct kinds of people participating, all of which we shall find represented in our own procession today. There were some who went on ahead . . . they are the persons who prepare the way of the Lord to your hearts, who govern you and direct your feet in the way of peace. There were others who walked behind. In them we have a type of those who, conscious of their ow'n ignorance, are fervent in following and faithful in adhering to the footsteps of their guides. Then there were the disciples who, as being more intimate with the Saviour, kept close to his side. These represent those who have chosen the better part; i.e. such as live to God alone in the seclusion of the cloister, always cleaving to God

and always intent upon his good pleasure. There was finally, the animal on which he sat. This typifies the hard-hearted and those whose minds are in some sense brutish . . . their presence adds nothing to the dignity and grandeur of the procession, because they cannot contribute anything, even to the music, being capable of nothing better than an unmelodious bray. Therefore the ass in the procession is representative of ungenerous souls who are always in need of the whip and the spur. Nevertheless, not even such as these will the Lord abandon provided they are willing to submit to discipline.

... There is, however, one respect in which the ass is to be envied, in that, to none other in the procession is the Lord so close. . . . Listen to the Prophet proclaiming the same fact: The Lord, sings David, is nigh to them that are of a contrite heart (Ps. 33. 19). So will a mother cherish more fondly and more frequently embrace the child whom she perceives to be ailing. Therefore let no one feel anger or contempt for those who are Christ's beasts of burden, for whosoever shall scandalize one of these little ones, shall gravely offend the Lord, who, like a mother, tenderly fosters them on the lap of his mercy, until they are strong enough to walk.

III. GREGORY PALAMAS

(The writer of this sermon was a Greek monk who lived in the thirteenth century; The sermon will be found in PG. 151; F. 178 and 187. The Orthodox Church gives him the title of Father of the Church.)

The sanctity necessary to celebrate Easter

After commenting on the fitness of the words of St Paul as preparation for Easter (Rom. 13. 13 ff): he continues: The evil lies in serving gluttony, drunkenness, dissolution, love of riches, avarice, injustice, vanity, presumption and pride. Let us leave aside, then, these evil things and do good. But what good ? Temperance, chastity, fasting, justice, almsdeeds, generosity, charity, humility, to be worthy partakers with that Lamb of God who was offered for us, and to receive the pledges of immortality which we shall keep in the firm hope of reaching the promised inheritance in heaven. . . .

But is it not more difficult to seek after good than after evil ? I do not think so; there are men who, because of their love of drink, suffer more than do temperate men; there are criminals who work harder than honest folk, ambitious people who are content with what is theirs; and those who are ambitious for glory make more effort than those who live in the shade. Let us make ourselves strong. . . .

Let all of us, whether young or old, rulers or subject to rule, let us all be children where evil is concerned that we may be defended by God and may carry his trophies and signs of victory, won, not only over the greater passions, but also over all enemies, visible and invisible, that we may obtain the grace of the Word which will help us on earth. . . .

SECTION IV. THEOLOGIANS

I. ST THOMAS AQUINAS*

A: The Passion of Christ

1. *Its necessity:*

Here St Thomas points out that God could, absolutely speaking, redeem the human race and forgive it the sin of Adam without having recourse to the sufferings and death of Christ. God is the supreme law-giver, and in thus pardoning man he would not have acted against justice. For this reason David prays, saying: Against thee alone have I sinned, meaning you can pardon me without injustice (3. q. 46. a. 2 *ad ÿum).*

However, given the decree of God to send his Son, it was then impossible to pardon man in any other way except by means of the passion of Christ (cf. 3. q. 46. a. 2. c).

2. *The convenience of it:*

(a) To manifest the justice and mercy of God:

That man should be delivered by Christ's passion was in keeping with both the justice and the mercy of God. With his justice, because by his passion Christ made satisfaction for the sin of the human race; and so man was set free by Christ's justice: and with his mercy, for since man of himself could not satisfy for the sin of all human nature . . . God gave his Son to satisfy for him according to Rom. 3. 24-25 . . . and this came of even more abundant mercy than if he had forgiven sins without satisfaction.

(b) For man's good and to teach him:

i. *The lesson of love.* In the first place, man knows thereby how much God loves him, and is thereby stirred to love him in return, and herein lies the perfection of human salvation (Rom. 5. 8).

ii. *Lesson of virtues.* Secondly, because therein he set us an example of obedience, humility, constancy, justice and the other

* Wc shall include on this Sunday the doctrine of St Thomas concerning the Passion and death of Christ—a doctrine which is objective, and perhaps because of that less sentimental than many things which are written about the Passion. It is, however, extremely useful for exciting affections of love for Christ and gratitude for his favours, more so perhaps than many of the sentimental sermons written on this theme.

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virtues displayed in the passion, which are requisite for man's salvation. Hence it is written: Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example, that you should follow his steps (1 Peter 2. 21).

iii. *Merited justifying grace for us.* Thirdly, because Christ, by his passion, not only delivered man from sin but also merited justifying grace for him and the glory of heaven, as will be shown later.

iv. *Hatred for sin.* Fourthly, because by this man is all the more bound to refrain from sin, according to 1 Cor. 6. 20. You are bought with a great price; glorify and bear God in your body.

v. *For man's greater dignity.* Fifthly, because it redounded to man's greater dignity', that as man was overcome and deceived by the devil, so also it should be a man who should overthrow the devil; and as man deserved death, so a man by dying should vanquish death.

B: The Sufferings of Christ

Having proved that Christ was capable of suffering both in soul and body, St Thomas considers two classes of suffering in particular:

i. *Sadness:*

By divine dispensation the joy of contemplation remained in the soul of Christ and in his mind in such a way as not to overflow into the sensitive parts, and thereby shut out sensitive pain. Now, just as sensible pain is in the sensitive appetites, so is sorrow; but there is a difference of motive or object. For the object of pain is some hurt perceived by the sense of touch, as when anyone is wounded; whereas the object and motive of sorrow is anything hurtful or evil interiorly, apprehended by the reason or imagination. ... Now Christ's soul could apprehend things as hurtful either to himself, as his passion and death, or to others, as the sin of his disciples or the Jews who killed him. And hence, as there could be true pain in Christ, so too, could there be true sorrow (3. q. 15. a. 6. c).

2. *Fear:*

As sorrow' is caused by the apprehension of a present evil, so also is fear caused by the apprehension of a future evil. Now, this apprehension, if the evil be quite certain, does not arouse fear. Hence the philosopher says that we do not fear a thing unless there is some hope of avoiding it. When there is no hope of avoiding the evil it is considered to be present and thus it causes sorrow rather than fear. Hence fear may be considered in two ways. First in as much as the sensitive appetite shrinks from bodily hurt by sorrow if it is present and by fear if it is future; and this fear was in Christ even as sorrow. Secondly, fear may be considered in the uncertainty of the future event, as when at night we are frightened at a sound, not knowing what it is; and in this way there was no fear in Christ

3. *All classes of sorrows were in Christ:*

Human sufferings may be considered under two aspects. First of all, specifically, and in this way it was not necessary for Christ to endure them all, since many are mutually exclusive, such as burning and drowning; for we are dealing with those sufferings which are inflicted from without, since it was not becoming for him to suffer those arising from within. . . . But, speaking generically, he did endure every human suffering. . . .

i. *On the part of men.* For he endured something from Gentiles and from Jews; from men and women, as is clear from the women servants who accused Peter, He suffered from the rulers, from their servants and from the mob ... he suffered from friends and acquaintances, as is manifest from the betrayal of Judas and the denial of Peter.

ii. On *the part of the things he suffered.* Christ suffered from friends abandoning him; in his reputation, from blasphemies hurled at him; in his honour and glory, from the mockeries and the insults heaped upon him; in things, for he was despoiled of his garments; in his soul, from weariness, sadness and fear; in his body, from wounds and scourgings.

iii. *On the part of his bodily members.* In his head he suffered from the crown of piercing thorns; in his hands and feet from the nails; on his face from the blows and spittle; and from the lashes over his entire body. He suffered in all his bodily senses: in touch by being scourged and nailed; in taste, by being given vinegar and gall to drink; in smell, by being fastened to the gibbet in a place reeking with corpses, which is called Calvary; in hearing, by being tormented with the cries of blasphemers and scoffers; in sight by beholding the tears of his Mother and of the disciple whom he loved (3. q. 46. a. 5. c).

4. *The pain of Christ's passion greater than any other:*

(a) Because of the causes of the pain:

For the cause of the sensitive pain was the wounding of his body and this wounding had its bitterness, both from the extent of the sufferings already mentioned and also from the kind of suffering; since death by crucifixion is most bitter, because victims are pierced in nervous and highly sensitive parts of the body—to wit, hands and feet; moreover the weight of the suspended body intensifies the agony; and besides this there is the duration of the suffering, because they do not die at once, like those slain by the sword. The cause of the interior pain was first of all the sins of the human race, for which he made satisfaction by suffering . . . secondly, especially the fall of the Jews and of the others who sinned in his death, chiefly of the Apostles who were scandalized at his passion. Thirdly the loss of his bodily life which is horrible to human nature.

(b) From the susceptibility of the sufferer:

For his body was endowed with a most perfect constitution, since it was fashioned miraculously by the Holy Ghost ... and consequently Christ's sense of touch, the sensitiveness of which is the reason for our feeling pain, was most acute. His soul likewise, from its interior powers, apprehended most vehemently all the causes of sadness.

(c) The purity of his suffering:

In other sufferers the interior sadness is mitigated, as is the exterior suffering, by some consideration of reason, by some derivation or redundance from the higher powers into the lower; but it was not so with Christ, because he permitted each one of his powers to exercise its proper function.

(d) Because of its purpose:

The magnitude of Christ's sufferings can be measured by this, that he accepted them all voluntarily for man's deliverance from sin; and therefore he embraced the quantity of pain proportionate to the magnitude of the fruit which resulted therefrom (3. q. 46. a. 6. c *ad 41m).*

C: Two sermons for Palm Sunday, in summary' form

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On the Epistle

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Yours is to be the same mind which Christ Jesus shewed (Phil. 2. 5). We must have compassion on Christ in his sufferings, feeling for him in his pain. The son who does not weep for his father is either dead or unconscious; the former does not feel, the second does not understand.

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i. We must be of the same mind as Christ by knowledge, compassion and suffering:

(a) Knowledge:

We can be sure, too, that the Son of God has come to us and given us a sense of truth (1 John 5. 20). ... He is true God and eternal life *{ibid.).* As if he were to say: God has allowed us to see plainly that, by his death, he is the cause of our life. Therefore we must understand the goodness of God, who knew how to discover a means whereby the infinite and offended Judge could die for the offenders, and thus we should ponder all the details of his passion.

(b) Compassion:

Who cannot feel compassion at seeing Christ hanging there before his Mother? . . . What father would not allow his side to be opened to cure his sonr Christ did it for his very enemies. He has proved his love for us, by washing us clean from our sins in his own blood (Apoc. 1. 6).

If we did not have compassion we would be more insensible than the irrational creatures. Remember the earthquake, the graves which opened and the splitting of the veil of the temple (Matt. 27. 5i-52).

We must collect all the bitterness of the passion and make a bundle of myrrh from it, which we can meditate on more easily. For example, we might take that dreadful night when he offered prayer and entreaty to the God who could not save him from death, not without a piercing cry, not without tears (Heb. 5.7)... since these sensible things are more apt to move us than other more spiritual things from God.

(c) Suffering:

We should suffer something in our sinful flesh, since Christ did it in his, which was innocent. It is not fitting that the king should fight while the soldier sleeps in his tent. If we wish to enter into glory with Christ then we must follow a road which is identical with his. And if at any time you should feel weariness in this following of Christ, then listen to St Paul: Take your standard from him, from his endurance, from the enmity the wicked bore him, and you will not grow faint, you will not find your souls unmanned (Heb. 12. 3).

2. *The three impediments which hinder us from doing these three things:*

St Thomas fists three things which can impede us: ignorance, which blinds our eyes to the dangers of sin; sensuality, which does not allowr us to appreciate the things of God, burying us in the mud; and lastly the habit of sin; especially the allowing sin to remain in the soul and grow old there instead of getting rid of it as quickly as possible by all the means in our power.

On the Gospel: Behold thy king is coming to thee (Matt. 21.5)

Introduction: we must consider (1) the authority of him who comes; (2) the gifts he brings to us.

1. *His authority:*

It is signified in the two w'ords, behold—your king.

(a) A king hailed as such at his very birth:

Where is he that has been born, the king of the Jews?; also in the first days of his apostolate: Thou art the King of Israel (John i. 49). Also on his leaving this earth: Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews (John 19. 19).

(b) The qualities of this king:

i. *His infinite power*— let us see him chastising Lucifer with hell and the human race with the flood, and Sodom with the rain of fire. . . .

iii. *A most wise king:* in his laws and commands; but let us see to it that we keep them, because if an earthly king were to prohibit certain things under dire penalties we would do everything possible to keep his law. It is God who commands us now. In the early days of the Church the faithful were careful to hear his words and do them. Now we have become careless, despising his wisdom and taking more care over human laws than over the divine.

iii. *A most just king.* Never let us forget it: from the beginning of the world he prepared that prison for the devil... often Christ has warned us of the punishment he will deal out to the wicked.

iv. *A most merciful king.* Mercy surrounds the justice of God in such a fashion that it both goes before it and follows it. With exemplar}' patience he waits for the sinner, calling him with promises and punishments, like a good mother who chastises her children but with sorrow in her heart. . . . If at any time he sees us abandoned by all, even by the angels, he comes running to our help.

2. *His gifts:*

(a) He himself:

He comes to us, not as a master but as a servant (Matt. 20. 28). Lost as we were, his only purpose in coming into this world was to redeem us, in which we can see God's immense liberality, who made a servant out of his Son (Gal. 4. 4), and the goodness of the Son, who died for us.

(b) The four purposes of his coming:

i. *As infinite power:* he comes to help us who are weak and feeble, snatching his sheep from the jaws of the wolves. He came, not merely to fight, but to encourage us to struggle too.

ii. *As infinite wisdom:* to instruct us. He gave us that instruction principally in the Sermon on the Mount, but sad to say, it often goes unheeded—men loved darkness rather than the light (John 3. 19).

iii. *As infinite justice:* to correct us. An example of this was the driving of the money changers and merchants from the temple. Today he pardons, but on the day of judgement. . . .

iv. *As infinite mercy:* to pardon us: the lost sheep, the prodigal son. It is not those who are in health that have need of the physician, it is those who are sick.... I have come to call sinners, not the just (Matt. 9. 12-13).

II. ST ROBERT BELLARMINE

The kingdom of Christ and its conditions (Summary)

1. *Introduction:*

Christ was king and priest, both offices being included in that of Messias. Within a few days he will sacrifice as a priest; today he acts as a king.

2. *His kingdom differs from those of the world:*

(a) He said so to Pilate (John 18. 36);

My kingdom is not of this world.

(b) Earthly kings usually rise to power over the dethroned bodies of predecessors:

Christ told Pilate, in those words, that there was no need for the Roman empire to fear anything from him.

(c) Earthly kings are chosen by the people:

Christ was elected King by his Father (Ps. 2. 6).

(d) Earthly kings rule only over the body:

Christ governs souls.

(e) Earthly kings surround themselves with armies:

Christ overcame the world not by steel, but through the wood on which he was crucified. For that reason today, when we celebrate his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the Passion is read. His arms were patience, humility, obedience and charity (John 12. 15).

3. *It is a holy and a just kingdom :*

(a) Christ is just:

i. *In rewarding :* even in the smallest things, e.g. a glass of water (Matt. 10. 42). Even those things which passed unnoticed by him who did them (Matt. 6. 4). Even if the things were done for one's own benefit, e.g. prayer. God hears it and rewards it. Who is capable of giving an alms and then rewarding the poor man for having asked for it? Which doctor will reward the sick who go to him?

ii. *Rewarding with greatest fidelity.* Without allowing forgetfulness, calumnies, his death or that of the subject to change his will or impede it.

iii. *In his punishments.* Because he knows and weighs consciences with an exact measure, which neither despises the sin nor values it at our caprice. He distinguishes mortal from venial sin and punishes accordingly.

(b) Christ is not a hard king:

How can he who was poor wish to impoverish us? He wished to be poor to show us that he did not need riches to conquer the world and

also to prove to us that we do not need them either in order to enter his kingdom.

4. *The tribute we owe to this king:*

The principal tribute we owe to him is that of our praise. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. This God exacts from us as his right, and we owe it to him.

Those deny him this praise who:

(a) Seek their own praise and glory all the time. St Francis said that he feared nothing so much as robbing God of his glory, because, according to his explanation, the sinner can do all that the saint does; give alms, pray, fast—with one big difference, instead of offering all for the glory' of God, the sinner does all these things for his own glory.

(b) Those who only praise God when all goes well with them; but when things go wrong they curse him with the most horrible blasphemies; a thing which is the greatest sin because it offends against faith and charity, and the most useless, because it gives us no pleasure or relief. (Cf. *Opera oratoria postuma,* t. 1, sec. 2, Dom. Palm., p. 237, Roma, 1942.)

III. F. VIGOUROUX

The Messianic idea in the time of Christ

I. *The prophets: the hopes of the people:*

The prophets, in the announcements of the Messias to come, do use words and phrases which, at first sight, seem to bear the interpretation of a material dominion and temporal power (cf. Isaias 25. 10; 40. 9-11; 41. 12).

The people, who since the time of the Babylonian captivity, have lived under a foreign yoke, feeling themselves to be the chosen people, easily fell into this error, considering the Messias as a liberator from the foreign oppressor. The two disciples on the way to Emmaus had this idea (Luke 24. 21), and so had others, as we see from what happened just before the Ascension (Acts. 1. 6). The yoke of the foreigner was more oppressive to them than the yoke of sin, and all their attention was fixed on it.

2. *The rabbinical interpretation:*

In the time of our Lord the rabbis interpreted the ancient prophecies in the same sense; according to all the literature of the time the Messias would be a temporal king, full of power and holiness. Thus, the Psalms of Solomon (27, 23, 46) which date from the time of Pompey; the fourth book of Esdras, that of Henoch and all the other apocryphal literature of the era. Antichrist is considered

• Cf. the article Messias in Vigouroux's *Dictionary of the Bible.*

by these same books to mean the powers of the other kingdom of the earth who will rise against the Messias.

The prophecy of Joel 3. 1-2 is considered as the announcement of the punishment which will be administered to these kings, represented by Antichrist, a punishment which will come either through force of arms or by means of a solemn judgement at the hands of an angel (2 Esdras 13. 28; Apoc.; Baruch 40. 1, etc.). After this victory the kingdom of the great king will be established; his sceptre will be over the whole earth and Israel will then mount on the neck and wings of the eagle—a possible reference to the power of the Roman empire.

3. *The temporal notion of the Messias:*

St Jerome, when commenting on the passage in Joel 3. 1-2, says that the Jews still dream of a great victory over the power of Rome after which they will have in their power all the sons and daughters of Rome and will sell them into slavery in the farthest parts of the earth.

No one knew how the Messias would come, and that is why the Jews tax our Lord with it, since they thought they knew his origin (John 7. 27). It would appear that his coming would be sudden, and that is probably why Satan, in the temptations, asks him to fling himself down from the pinnacle of the temple.

4. *Reflected in the Gospels:*

This idea of a temporal Messias appears in all the chapters of the Gospels. Herod fears the new king; after the multiplication of the loaves they try to make our Lord assume the temporal power of a king; in Jerusalem they are indignant because he makes himself out to be the Messias when he has such a humble appearance. Lastly, he is rejected by the Jewish political parties for the same reason. In the eyes of the Pharisees he is not Messias enough; in those of the Sadducees he is too much of a Messias, and will not fit in to their system, placing them in peril.

Before Pilate his enemies accuse him of political tendencies in conformity with the ideas they had of the Messias, who would arouse the people to revolt (Luke 23. 5); who is the king of the Jews (John 18. 33), who makes himself pass as a King, and against Caesar's claim (John 19. 12).

Rome knew of this mentality, and for that reason her officers were always on the watch for any manifestation of it; for the same reason no action was taken against Christ, whom they saw teaching a spiritual doctrine.

5. *The spiritualization which came later:*

Time passes and the Messias does not come, Why ? Because the sins of Israel impede his coming. 'If Israel were to do penance in common, if only for one day, the Messias would come to bring us

immediate liberty. If Israel observed the sabbaths according to the law, it would be at once set free' (Sanhedrin, 97a). Later this hope was given up altogether, in view of the continued sins of the people, until, in the Middle Ages, Maimonides and others recognize that many of the old prophecies were parables and enigmas. Some even went so far as to say that the kingdom of the Messias would be entirely spiritual and divine (EB. *Haned Ex. Hos.* 3. 4). Too late they were convinced.

IV. LERCHER-SCHLAGENHAUFEN·

Christ rejected the pharisaic notions of the Messias

1. *He rejected the political idea:*

He refused to be made a king (John 6. 15; Matt. 21. 17). His kingdom is not of this world (John 18. 36); he submits to all legal authority and pays the tax (Matt. 17. 26); render to Caesar that which is Caesar's, he says (Matt. 22. 21). For the same reason he refuses to use the title of Messias or Son of David. Pilate has to admit that the accusation of political agitation is false, and Christ is put to death because he made himself out to be the Son of God (John 19. 7).

2. *He rejected the national idea:*

He opposed the Pharisees, loved the Samaritans and opened his kingdom to all. He instituted a new authority which would rule the world.

3. *He inculcates his religious mission:*

In the sermon on the mount. Each one must follow Christ by taking up the Cross (Matt. 16. 24). He has come to save and he is the Good Shepherd (John 10. 11); he has come to give his life as a redemption for many. He builds a spiritual kingdom (Matt. 20.28).

SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. FRAY LUIS OF GRANADAf

1. *The true value of human glory:*

(a) The changeableness of public opinion:

Above all here you have a great argument and motive for despising the world's glory, after which men seek so avidly and for which they will go to such lengths.

Do you wish to see the true value of such glory? Let your eyes rest on the honour the world paid to our Lord and you will see that the very world which today receives him with such honour, in five

* Cf. *Institutiones Theologicae Dogmaticae.*
f Cf. *Memorial de la vida cristiana.*

days time will hold him worse than Barabbas and shout against him: Crucify him! Crucify him! . . . What clearer example could you have of what the glory of this world means and of how we must estimate the judgements and opinions of men ?... Today they say; tomorrow they contradict; today they praise, tomorrow they blaspheme; today they raise you to the highest heavens, tomorrow they cast you into the bottom of the pit.

(b) The deceit and egoism of the world's glory:

Such is the judgement of this many-headed beast and this deceitful monster that never keeps faith or truth or loyalty with anyone, nor does it measure the worth or virtue of anything except by its own interests. No one is good who is not prodigal with it, even though he be a pagan; and he alone is evil who treats it as it deserves, even though he may work miracles; it has no other standards by which to measure worth but its own interests.

With whom was it ever faithful to its word? To whom did it ever give what it had promised. With whom was it friendly for ever? To whom did it ever sell wine which was not watered with a thousand anxieties ? It is faithful and constant in one thing only—in never keeping faith with anyone.

2. *Do not allow yotirself to be deceived:*

(a) The frailty of human glory:

Then we have, in this Gospel, a wonderful example and medicine to cure a common ill of human nature, the appetite for worldly glory, which our common enemy makes sure to keep burning brightly, because he knows very well that, once we are blinded by this love, there is no need for him to do any more. He has an open door then for all that he wills.

It is a wonderful thing to see, in this connection, the cunning of Satan, because in spite of the fact that this glory is such a passing thing, so frail, so deceitful, almost nothing so to speak, he paints it in such glowing colours and represents it in such a way that men will go to any lengths for it. ... For it we are willing to lose everything, despising our lives and our very souls, together with all that God has promised us.

(b) It is deceitful:

Do you want to see now the greatness of this deceit ? Let us go no further; gaze on this honour which the world gave to the Lord ...

Oh, What different voices they were ? On the one hand, Crucify him! Crucify him! and on the other: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. . . . What different voices, today crying King of Israel, and in a few days time: We have no king but Caesar! What different things too; today flowers and branches of trees, tomorrow thorns, blows and the cross.

Him whom now they serve with their own garments they will soon strip of his and cast lots for them. Him whom today they acclaim as the Son of David, the most holy of all the saints, tomorrow they esteem lower than the lowest, less worthy of life than Barabbas. W hat example could be clearer to show us what is the true glory of this world and how its judgements and gifts should be esteemed?

3. *The blindness of those who serve the world:*

It is a thing worthy of pity to see how, even after the benefits of the redemption, men are such slaves to the world and how careful to keep in its good books.

There are many who have no command over themselves nor liberty to do a thousand things necessary' for their souls and bodies, because they are afraid that the world will not approve, even though God approves and commands them, taking more notice of what the world will think than of what God is going to say to them at the end of the world. . . .

Why, after having been freed and redeemed by Christ, do you wish to become slaves once more to this miserable tyrant?

II. BOSSUET

A: Meditations on the Gospel

1. *The kingdom of Christ and his followers:*

(a) The conditions:

The miracles attracted the people around Christ—they were a characteristic of his kingdom, destined to confirm his teaching. That is why he performed them and he said so when he raised Lazarus from the dead. For myself I know that thou hearest me at all times, but I say this for the sake of the multitude which is standing round, that they may learn to believe that it is thou who hast sent me (John 11.42). What is more, these miracles are nearly always cures; thus uniting miracles, preaching and health for the sick. . . . There are the chief characteristics of his kingdom; miracles, charity' and teaching.

(b) Few followers:

We hear much applause around the Lord's person, but we see few real disciples. Why after a few days do we hear the cries of Crucify him? Because they are not disciples of Christ who admire him, praise him and exteriorly follow him to any given place, but those who follow him interiorly and in all places keep his commandments, carry his cross and renounce their own will. There are few of these.

* From Bossuet's meditations on the last week of our Lord's life.

Let us, then, be true disciples of the Lord. If you continue faithful to my word you are my disciples in earnest; so you will come to know the truth, and the truth will set you free (John 8. 31). My Father's name has been glorified, if you yield abundant fruit, and prove yourselves my disciples *{ibid. 15.* 8). He who loves me keeps my commandments; for the rest, they may praise me, admire me, follow me exteriorly and take glory in the fact that they are my disciples, because the whole world feels honoured to have me for its Master and Teacher; but they do not really love me neither do I count them among the number of my disciples.

2. *Humiliation in triumph:*

Speaking of the two Gentiles who asked to see our Lord he says: He saw that, according to the ancient prophecies, it was his death which would purchase this great people and the prosperity which had been promised. First he had to see both his hands and his feet pierced, that the whole world might be won over to him.

Quoting the words of our Lord: The time has now come for the Son of Man to achieve his glory. Believe me when I tell you this; a grain of wheat must fall into the ground and die, or else it remains nothing more than a grain of wheat; but if it dies, then it yields rich fruit (John 12. 23-24); he goes on: In these words of our Lord we shall find the true commentary and explanation of the ancient prophecies, and we also see the road we have to travel if we would be like him. We are the grain of wheat, and we have within us the seed of life. This is the road by which we shall bring forth much fruit. But first of all it is necessary that everything in us should die. It is necessary that this germ of life should separate itself from all that surrounds it. That is the price of fertility. Let us fall, then; let us hide ourselves in the earth; let us humble ourselves, allow all the exterior man to perish, the life of the senses, of pleasure, honour, curiosity, concupiscence, all that is sensible in us; then this inner fertility will expand and produce much fruit.

B: The false honour of the world

1. *Introduction and division:*

According to Tertullian the triumphs celebrated in Rome were so magnificent that it was necessary to put a slave behind the victor who would remind him of his human condition. That of Christ is so humble, seated on an ass, that it would seem to require someone to remind him that he is God. The reason is that this king came to triumph over human greatness, rejecting sceptres and despising honours.

Come here, all human honours; come to a tribunal which is not of Caesars, princes or heroic captains, because all these adore you, but to the tribunal of a king who is crowned with thorns, in ridicule

dressed in purple and nailed to a cross. Come, because I would accuse you of three crimes; of the corruption of virtue, of the disguising of vice, presenting it as good; and of granting to men what vou steal from God.

2. *Worldly honour corrupts virtue:*

St John Chrysostom, with language more cutting than ours, says that virtue which smacks of vain-glory is like an unchaste woman. Truly, modesty is the proper garb for virtue, and virtuous people blush for shame, not only when they hear impure words, but also when they hear themselves praised; just as there is such a thing as chastity of body, so there is integrity of soul, which is violated by adulation. Airtue is a handmaid who must be guarded for Christ, her spouse, who wants a heart which is not corrupted by outside affections.

A'ain glory' prostitutes virtue, presenting it to the eyes of men adorned as a woman before imprudent lovers—Airtue sold for a miserable price.

Be careful, because vain-glory is an enemy which attacks us disguised, crawling like a snake among flowers, hidden under the guise of virtue in order to destroy it. How difficult it is to despise the praises of men, bom as we are in society and for it.

(a) You say that you do not seek praise and do not work for it? Listen to St Augustine, who says that it is easy to do without those praises which are never given, but it is very difficult not to take pleasure in those which are offered to us.

(b) AVhat danger is there, you may ask, in taking pleasure in so innocent a thing? Have you not yet understood what Christian virtue means? The world itself denies honours to those who seek them with too much ardour. And if from the world we pass on to the Son of God, he taught us clearly to reject them: I do not mean that I look for honour from men . . . (John 5. 41). . . . How should you learn to believe, you who are content to receive honour from one another, and are not ambitious for the honour which comes from him, who alone is God? *(ibid.* 5. 44). Notice the contrast; it is impossible to seek the glory of men if you look for the glory of God.

3. *Disguises vice as virtue:*

(a) Worldly vices:

He goes on to describe the difference between the true Christian virtue and that of the world: The former is severe, constant, inflexible, subject to rule, incapable of turning aside. It is not a virtue proper to the world. . . . The world manufactures a very different type of virtue; ... it is comfortable, not subject to too many rules otherwise it would be too austere, but certainly it pays attention to the ideas and the tastes of men. It is a virtue proper to the shopkeeper; it will always be careful not to fail in its word, but on certain

occasions it will have no scruples and will know how to enrich itself at the expense of the neighbour. ... It is the virtue of those who have none.

(b) Vices disguised:

Evil with no restrictions dare not present itself, because it is too evil, says St John Chrysostom. If a man make a profession of always deceiving he will never take anyone in; but if he deceives once or twice only, if he gives a feast in his house or on his lands, if he disguised his lust as gallantry, sweetness and affability, then he will be praised and can go with uplifted head anywhere he chooses.

(c) **Vain-glory stifles conscience:**

When conscience tries to make the sinner's life bitter a whole army of flatterers appear on the scene. This is the last effort of honour to honour vice. After having deceived all the world it is necessary that the sinner should be quite content with himself. ... He knows that within him there is a secret flatterer whose voice is in perfect accord with those outside . . . and forgetting what he is really like, he will search in the words of others and imagine himself to be as they represent him (St Gregory, *Pastor.* 2. c. 6).

(d) It robs God of his glory:

i. *Man attributes everything to himself:* If worldly honour were only content to make us see our good qualities so as to give ourselves glory in Christ and thank him, we would not then call it worldly honour nor would we dare to classify it among the vices. But the man who desires worldly praise is far from such sentiments. He attributes everything to himself, and according to St Fulgentius, it is a greater thing to rob God of what is his than to disobey him in any other sin *(Ep.* 6. *ad Theodos,* c. 7). Since Adam wanted to be like God we have all tried to convert ourselves into little gods.

ii. *The example of Christ:* Man makes himself God by his pride, God made himself man through humility; man attributes falsely to himself w'hat is God's; God, to teach us humility, truly assumes what is man's. . . . After this, shall we still take into account the judgements of the world ?

III. BOURDALOUE

1. *Introduction:*

The resurrection of Lazarus preceded and caused the enthusiasm of the Jews today. Also in these days Christians are accustomed to go to confession and receive our Lord, once their souls have risen again from sin.

* From the *Sermon for Palm Sunday.*

PALM SUNDAY

In the Jews who sincerely acclaimed Christ we can see a type of those who make good communions, and in the Pharisees an example of a sacrilegious communion.

2. *The good communion:*

(a) Those who greet the Lord with acclamations are his disciples:

God only wishes to admit to communion his own. At the last supper he did that, and even today St Paul's words still stand: A man must examine himself first . . . (i Cor. n. 28). But let us realize that they alone are his true disciples \who are so in works.

(b)^They go out to meet Jesus:

We'also must go out with due preparation. I speak also to those who go to communion daily, even though Avith one communion they prepare for the next. But above all I am talking to those who, after having allowed years to pass without going to communion, wait until a moment before to prepare themselves. Let them go out to receive him with due preparation.

(c) With palms:

The palms are a symbol of our victon' over the world and sin; the olives of our peace with God.

(d) They strip themselves and place their clothes at our Lord's feet:

Let us do the same by stripping ourselves of all worldly superfluity'.

(e) Christ on his side:

i. will come as a king, who reigns and makes me obey him;

ii. as a peaceful king who, so as not to frighten me, hides his grandeur; and as a king-benefactor, applying a remedy for all my sicknesses, just as he cured the sick who were near the temple.

3. *A bad communion:*

The Pharisees go out into the streets through human respect. So there are many who go to communion merely to comply with their social obligations, rich men, public figures. . . . They did not kill the Lord because they feared the people. . . . but secretly they plotted against him. Just as these do who combine in their thoughts holy communion and vices.

They treated as false his miracles . . . just as do these, who mock at true sanctity and would like to hush up the effects of a good communion when they see them in others.

With reason Christ wept over the city which wasted his graces. What, then, is to be done : Not go to communion ? No; make good communions.

IV. DOM COLUMBA MARMION

The Passion and the Way of the Cross

The contemplation of the sorrows of Christ:

(a) The devotion:

The Passion constitutes the Holy of Holies among the mysteries of Jesus. It is the crowning point of his public life, the summit of his mission here below, the work to which all the others converge or from which they draw their value.

Each year, during Holy Week, the Church commemorates in detail the various phases of the Passion; each day, in the sacrifice of the Mass, she renews the remembrance and the reality of it, in order to apply its fruits to us.

To this central act of the Liturgy is attached a practice of piety which, without belonging to the public official worship organized by the Bride of Christ, has become, on account of the abundance of graces whereof it is the source, very dear to faithful souls. This is the devotion to the Passion of Jesus under the well-known form of the 'Way of the Cross'.

The immediate preparation that the Saviour made before his oblation as High Priest upon Calvary was to bear his cross from the Pretorium to Calvary, overwhelmed by sufferings, despised and insulted.

The blessed Virgin Mary and the first Christians evidently more than once re-traced this path, shedding tears of compassion at the places sanctified by the sufferings of the God-Man.

We know with what glowing fervour the faithful of the West undertook, in the Middle Ages, the long and painful pilgrimage to the Holy Places, there to venerate the Saviour's blood-stained foot-steps; their piety was nourished at an unfailing source of priceless graces. Returned to their own country they had it at heart to pre-sene the remembrance of the days passed in prayer at Jerusalem. From this it befell that, especially from the fifteenth century, the sanctuaries and the 'stations' of the holy city were almost everywhere reproduced. The piety of the faithful thus found a means of satis-fying itself by a spiritual pilgrimage renewed at will. Later on, at a comparatively recent period, the Church enriched this practice with the same indulgences gained by those who make the 'stations' at Jerusalem.

(b) The fruitfulness of this meditation:

This contemplation of the sufferings of Jesus is very fruitful. After the Sacraments and liturgical worship, there is no practice more useful for our souls than the Way of the Cross made with devotion. Its supernatural efficacy is beyond compare. What is the reason of this ?

First of all, because the Passion of Jesus is his essential work; it were foretold. There is no other mystery of Jesus whereof the circumstances were announced with so much care by the Psalmist and the prophets, . . .

Moreover, we should love to meditate upon the Passion because it is also therein that Christ's virtues shine forth with such brilliancy. He possesses every virtue within his soul, but the occasions of manifesting them arise especially in his passion. His immense love for his Father, his charity for mankind, hatred of sin, forgiveness of injuries, patience, meekness, fortitude, obedience to lawful authority, compassion, all these virtues shine out in an heroic manner in these davs of sorrow.

There is a third aspect which we too often forget, an aspect which is, however, of extreme importance. When we consider the sufferings of Jesus, he grants us, according to the measure of our faith, grace to practise the virtues which he revealed during those holy hours. How is this?

When Christ dwelt upon earth, an all-powerful virtue went out from his divine Person, healing bodily' infirmities, enlightening the mind and quickening the soul. . . .

Something analogous comes to pass when we place ourselves in contact with Jesus by faith. To those who lovingly' followed him along the road to Golgotha or were present at his immolation, Christ surely granted special graces. This virtue which then went out from him still does so; and when in a spirit of faith, in order to compassionate his sufferings and to imitate him, we follow him from the Pretorium to Calvary and take our stand at the foot of the Cross, he gives us the same graces. . . . Never let us forget that Jesus Christ is not a dead and inert model; but, ever living, he supernaturally produces in those who draw near to him in the right dispositions, the perfection that they contemplate in his Person.

At each station our divine Saviour presents himself to us in this triple character: as the Mediator who saves us by his merits, the perfect model of sublime virtues and the efficacious cause who can, through his divine omnipotence, produce in our souls the virtues of which he gives us the example. . . .

That is why if, every day, during a few moments, interrupting your work, laying aside your preoccupations and closing your heart to all outwards things, you accompany the God-Man along the road to Calvary, with faith, humility, and love, with the true desire to imitate the virtues he manifests in his passion, be assured that your souls will receive choice graces which will transform them little by little into the likeness of Jesus and of Jesus crucified. And is it not in this likeness that St Paul sums up all holiness? *(Christ in His Mysteries,* pp. 266-270.)

SECTION VI. PAPAL TEXTS

Jesus and the Children

1. The Gospel makes quite clear to us the immense love of Jesus for little children. It was his delight to be among them; he used to impose his hands upon them, embrace them, bless them. When the apostles tried to send them away on one occasion he was very angry with them and rebuked them for it. But Jesus was indignant at seeing this: Let the children come to me, he said, do not keep them back; the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you truthfully, the man who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a child, will never enter into it (Mark io. 13 if.).

2. Christ loves children, the model of humility and the norm of innocence. Because of this example of her Founder the Church, too, in all ages, has paid special attention to the children under her care, in order to make sure that their innocence is preserved. She knows only too well that what they learn during those formative years and the virtues they acquire constitute the foundation for the future, which nothing can replace in quite the same way. With pain she has observed the growing numbers of children who find themselves without homes, sick or subject to the dangers of vice. For which reason also she has made a special and a determined effort to awaken the modern conscience to the dangers and to effect a communal effort to remedy this situation (cf. Pius XII, *Quemadmodum, 6* January, 1946; also the *Allocution to those recently married,* 19 June 1939 and that to the *Association of Catholic Teachers,* 4 November 1945).

3. Education without God is the greatest of our modern evils. On this subject the authority is Pius XI *{Encycl. Divini illius Àiagistri,* 31 December 1929):

> It is, therefore, extremely important to make no mistake in this question of education ; as important, in fact, as it is to make no mistake about man's final destiny, for it is to this that the entire work of education is necessarily directed. For if the whole purpose of education is so to shape man in this mortal life that he will be able to reach the last end for which his Creator has destined him, it is plain that there can be no true education which is not totally directed to that last end. Moreover, since God has revealed himself in his only-begotten Son who alone is the 'way, truth and life,' it is equally plain that, in the present order of Providence which God has instituted, there can be no complete and perfect education other than that which is called Christian education.

4. *The responsible agents in education:*

Education is necessarily a social, not an individual function. Now, there are three necessary societies of which a man becomes a member

from birth . . . two of these, the family and civil society, are of the natural order, and the third, the Church, is of the supernatural order . . . this function belongs in due proportion to die three Societies aforementioned in conformity with the proper end of each and in the order of providence established by God.

5. *The pre-eminent right of the Church:*

'Education is first and super-eminently the function of the Church; and this by a twofold supernatural title which God has conferred upon her alone and which therefore transcends in authority and validity' any tide of the natural order.' The Holy Father then goes on to state that these tides are her supreme role as teacher and mother. They give her a right which is independent of any earthly power and which is universal in its scope. She also has a further right, that of supervision, which again she cannot surrender to anyone else.

6. *The right of the family:*

This is also God-given and therefore prior to that of the State and inviolable. The Church has expressed this right in one comprehensive statement of the Code: 'Parents are bound by a very grave obligation to care for the religious, moral, physical and civic education of their children to the best of their ability and also to provide for their temporal welfare' (can. 1113).

7. *This right is subject to the natural and divine law:*

'But it must not be concluded that the parental right in education is absolute and despotic; it is closely subordinated to man's last end and subject to the natural and divine law.' Leo XIII explains this in his memorable Encyclical on the principal duties of a Christian citizen, where he thus summarizes the rights and duties of parents:

> Parents have by nature a right to instruct the children they have begotten; but they have also the duty to ensure that the child's education and training shall conform to the purpose for which God gave them their offspring. They must therefore energetically resist any invasion of their rights in this sphere, and absolutely insist on having it in their power to bring up their children in a Christian manner, in accordance with their duty; above all, they must have the right to keep them away from schools in which there is a danger of their being infected by irréligion (*Sap. Christ.*, 10 January 1890).

8. The Pope then goes on to speak about the part to be played by the State in education. Its prime function is that of protection of parental rights in this matter and those of the children. Its duty is to promote the Church and family welfare in education, and it has only a limited right to supervise it.

7. *The Christian family:*

The first and natural environment for education is the child's family, which is divinely instituted for that purpose. Consequently we shall rightly regard as most enduring and reliable the training which is received in a well-regulated and virtuous family, the more effectual and enduring according as the household and especially the parents, edify the children by their virtuous example. . . . We therefore entreat and implore pastors of souls, by the divine charity which Jesus Christ bears towards men, to use every means—through sermons and instructions, by word of mouth and by widely circulated writings—to ensure that Christian parents are instructed, not only in theory, but also in detail, regarding their duty to impart a religious, moral and civic education to their children, and regarding the most effectual methods—in addition to their own most virtuous example—of achieving that end *(Div. ill. Mag.)*.

8. *Education in sex matters:*

Pope Pius XII, speaking to a gathering of Catholic mothers in Rome in the year 1941 said:

With the discretion of a mother and a teacher, and thanks to that open-hearted confidence with which you have been able to inspire your children, you will not fail to watch for and to discern the moment in which certain unspoken questions have occurred to their minds and are troubling their senses. It will then be your duty to your daughters and the father's duty to your sons, carefully and delicately to unveil the truth as far as it appears to be necessary to give a prudent, true and Christian answer to those questions, and to set their minds at rest. If imparted by the lips of Christian parents and at the proper time, in the proper measure and with the proper precautions, the revelations of the mysterious and marvellous laws of life will be received by them with reverence and gratitude, and will enlighten their minds with far less danger than if they learnt them haphazard, from some unpleasant shock, from secret conversations, through information received from over-sophisticated companions, or from clandestine reading, the more dangerous and pernicious as secrecy inflames the imagination and troubles the senses.

SECTION VII. HISTORICAL AND LITERARY NOTES

A: The Passion according to the evidence from the Holy Shroud of Turin

The public exhibitions of this strange relic of the Passion, one at the wedding in 1898 of the heir to the House of Savoy and the

other at the instance of Pope Pius XI in 1933, have done much to convince scientists that here we have a genuine relic of Christ's Passion. However, the interesting thing is the light it throws on some details of that Passion, and some of these will be mentioned here.

1. *The 'blow' of John* 18. *22:*

According to the deductions of Professor Judica of the University of Milan, after an examination of the evidence provided by the shroud, it was not a blow with the fist which the official gave Christ in the house of Annas, but a blow with a stick. The bruise left on our Lord's right cheek denotes that the instrument which produced it was a cane or stick, rather short and of four to five centimetres in diameter. The blow was delivered by someone standing at his right side; which fits with what we know of Jewish customs, because, while the Romans used the right hand for their sword play, the Jew used the left, since he was more accustomed to the use of that hand in writing. The nose was not broken, but the cartilage border has been broken and twisted to the left (cf. Judica Cordiglia, Giovanni, *La Sindone contro Pilato. Momenti della Passione visti do un medico^* Turin, 1942).

2. *The scourging:*

On studying the evidence provided by the Holy Shroud—says Dr W. Hynek of the University of Prague—I have been able to realize what a horrible penalty scourging was in ancient times, a torture which our present generation knows nothing of. I myself, as a doctor, admit that I would never even have imagined what this torment was like if I had not seen the shoulders of the figure on the shroud.

The whole body of our Saviour, his chest, stomach, kidneys and the pelvic muscles, all show innumerable wounds, some of which, especially those on the ribs, are worse than the others. These wounds are crossed one over the other and superimposed to such an extent that it is true to say that there is not in the whole body a place without its wound. . . . They give the impression of ulcers all over the body and one might say that they look like a disease of the skin, such as leprosy.

Among these injuries there are open wounds, which run in pairs, about three centimetres long. We have been able to count about eighty, which probably correspond to forty strokes of the whip. The Jewish law admitted only thirty-nine, but the Roman law knew no such restrictions, the number of blows being limited by the will of the lictors, together with the powers of resistance of the victim. According to Noguier de Malijay, the Roman scourge was made of up two small lead balls, separated by a bar, to which the lash was joined; there were usually two such lashes to each whip

and it was a most cruel instrument in the hands of a skilled user, being capable of laying bare the bones and flaying the victim alive.

When we examine the wounds spread over the body of our Lord it is a marvel that he did not die under this torture (Hynek, R. W., *La Passione di Cristo, e la scienza medica,* Milan, pp. 97-99).

This figure of eighty wounds corresponds more or less with that given by Dr Barbet (cf. *La Passione di N.S. Gesu Cristo, secondo el chirurgo,* Turin, p. 108-109) who has counted 120 wounds from sixty strokes of the whips. The same author reconstructs the scourge, saying that it consisted of two thongs. During the torture Christ must have been naked, because there are wounds in the pelvic area which indicate that it was not covered by the *subligaculum.* He even goes to the extent of saying that there were two lictors, one taller than the other (from the direction of the blows) and that they stood one on each side of our Lord.

3. *Lesions suffered in the way of the Cross:*

Dr Barbet has also discovered on the shroud wounds which our Lord must have received on his way to Calvary. These are injuries to the knees, especially the right knee, which presents wounds on the knee cap of considerable extent. The lesions on the left knee are less grave and obvious than those on the right.

The marks of the cross on his shoulders are clear on the shroud. On the right shoulder, just above the shoulder blade, there is a rectangular bruise about 10 centimetres long by 9 broad. Just below it, on the shoulder blade itself, there is another injured area which presents the same characteristics, about 14 centimetres in diameter.

4. *The wounds in the hands:*

Owing to the observations of Professor Barbet and his numerous anatomical experiments, it has been possible to localize exactly the situation of the wounds in the hands of Jesus. The nails did not pass through the palms as is commonly thought, but through the wrist, in the carpal region at a point called the 'free space of Destot', where a large nail can pass through without breaking a bone. Driven through this space, the nails can support the whole weight of a body without breaking the tissues. This is clear on the left hand as it is seen on the shroud.

5. *The lance stroke and wound in the side:*

It is a common lay opinion that the heart is situated at the left side of the chest. This is not quite exact; because the point of the heart only lies to the left; two-thirds of the organ being contained in the left half of the thoracic cavity and about one-third in the right half. The base is directed upwards, backwards and to the right, and lies opposite the bodies of the middle four thoracic vertebrae—i.e. the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth. The antero-superior surface, which is convex, lies behind the lower three-fourths of the

body of the sternum and the corresponding costal cartilages, right and left—namely, the third, fourth, fifth and sixth.

Owing to the erroneous opinion we have mentioned, Christ is usually pictured with rhe wound on the left side, whereas, as Dr Barbet points out, the shroud shows us clearly that the wound was on the right, being 4 4 centimetres long by 1.5 wide.

According to Barbet, it was caused by the thrust from the lance of a soldier on foot, the point penetrating the fifth right inter-costal space, piercing the pleura and the pericardium and opening the right auricle of the heart itself (in which there is always blood after death). The blood came from the right auricle and the water from the pericardium.

6. *The crown of thorns:*

If we study the wounds left on his body by the crown of thorns as the Holy Shroud shows them to us and also the evidence proved by Rohault de Fleury (cf. *Mémoire sur les Instruments de la Passion de N. S. J. Christ,* Paris, 1890), we find that it was not a narrow band as is commonly supposed, but a cap which covered the head and was kept in place by bands of reeds. Naturalists have even identified the thorn bush concerned, the *zizyphus vulgaris,* with its long thorns, so sharp that they easily pierce the flesh and leave a small wound with a trickle of blood. The branches were doubled in half to form a cap and their ends were joined together by the reed band which went round the head.

According to the same author, the relics of the crown of thorns fall into three groups; first the reeds, the most important relic of which is in Notre Dame of Paris, consisting of a band of 21 centimetres. This was once one of the treasures of the Byzantine emperors which passed into the possession of France in 1238.

The second group is made up of the branches with thorns on them, of which, according to Fleury', there are fourteen in all in the whole world.

The last group is composed of isolated thorns, fifty-three in France, thirty-two in Italy, four in Germany, four in Belgium, four in England and four in Yugoslavia. In Spain, according to the author, there are only three, in Toledo, Valencia and Tarrega, but to these we must add the ones in Seville, Medina de Rioseco and La Espina. In other words, there are 128 thorns in the whole world.

B: The cross and crucifixion

(These notes are taken from the most modem authorities on the subject; e.g. U. Holzmeister S. J., *Crux Domini atque crucifixio, quomodo ex archaelogia romana illustrantur,* Rome, 1935, and Rohault de Fleury, *Mémoire sur les Instruments de la Passion de N. S. J. Christ,* Paris, 1890.)

1. *The wood of the cross:*

There arc di flerent opinions. The best modern opinion seems to be that the cross was of pine wood.

The following forms of cross exist, according to Holzmeister, the *crux itimisa,* the one usually pictured in modern art, consisting of a long upright (stipes) and a shorter cross-beam (the patibulum), which was inset in the stipes; the *crux conmisa* in the form of a T, in which the cross-beam was set into the top of the stipes; there is also the form known as *decussata,* commonly known as St Andrew's cross. It would appear that the first of these forms was that used to crucify the Saviour and it measured roughly 198 inches in height and the cross-beam 102 inches. The weight of the whole cross would then be approximately 220 lb. Whether or not there was a *sedile* or small projection on which the victim was seated is unknown for certain; although St Justin, St Irenaeus and Tertullian speak of it. The rest for the feet, mentioned only by St Gregory of Tours in the sixth century, was probably not used at the time, the feet being nailed straight to the wood of the upright, the knees bent to bring them into that position. It is still disputed whether the feet were nailed separately or one over the other, the evidence of the shroud seemingly indicating the latter.

It would also seem that Christ carried to Calvary only the cross-beam, not the whole cross, but this is still controverted. The evidence of the shroud seems to point to this opinion, however, and if it is true the upright may have been a permanent fixture on Calvary', in which case the Saviour's hands would be nailed to the cross-beam and then he would be lifted on to the upright and his feet nailed afterwards.

2. *The nails:*

Traditionally there were four (cf. Fleury and Holzmeister) according to the Roman custom; but later authors, after a detailed study of the shroud, are inclined to think that, in the case of Christ, there were only three, one longer nail being used for the feet. These were discovered by St Helen, who, it is said, used one for the bit of Constantine's bridle and the others were preserved in Constantinople until the year 550. There are thirty-two relics of these nails in the Christian world, and it is possible that most of them have a small piece of the original nails in them. The ones usually regarded as authentic are that of Paris, Trêves and Santa Croce in Rome. There is one in the Escorial given to Philip II by St Charles Borromeo.

3. *The title INRI:*

From the fragment preserved in Santa Croce Fleury has reconstructed the whole title, which measured approximately 10 inches by 6 inches. It was of wood, painted with white-lead and the letters

in red, previously carved in the wood. The Greek and Latin words were also written backwards, like those of the Hebrew, a curious thing, but not unknown in other inscriptions of the time. It is thought that the title was taken to Rome by St Helen and was later lost for several centuries, being rediscovered in the Church of Santa Croce.

SECTION VIII. SERMON SCHEMES

I. LITURGICAL

A: Let us glory in the Cross

To victory through the Cross

1. As we pointed out last Sunday, it is important to impress on the people the objective side of the passion of our Lord, an aspect usually neglected in favour of a more sentimental approach which will appeal to the heart.

2. However, this objective approach to the subject is necessary to understand the liturgy'.

3. The liturgy nearly always presents at one and the same time the idea of the Cross and that of victory.

(a) On Easter Sunday the cross is mentioned; and today, the entrance to Holy Week, the triumph is also referred to.

(b) On the day of our Lord's resurrection all is triumph and joy; but in the Paschal Vigil and in the sequence of the Mass of Easter there are references to the cross and to the death of the Saviour.

i. Oh how inestimable is thy love; thou hast delivered up thy son to redeem a slave!

ii. Oh truly necessary sin of Adam, which the death of Christ has blotted out!

iii. Death and life fought a wonderful duel; the Lord of Life, once dead, now rises alive to reign (Sequence of Mass for Easter),

(c) Today, in a penitential Mass where everything alludes to the Passion the Epistle refers to the exaltation of Christ.

4. We have a symbol of this spirit in the procession of the palms.

(a) The cross goes first, then the faithful and the clergy with palms. The Church doors are shut; blows are delivered and they open wide. Behind the cross everyone enters the church.

(b) When we look at this ceremony we feel the urge to cry out with St Paul: God forbid that I should make a display of anything, except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world stands crucified to me and I to the world (Gal. 6. 14); and we might add, in the words of the Introit for Wednesday and Thursday of Holy Week. in which is our salvation, our life and our resurrection

The cross in history

1. *Before Christ:*

One of the most painful and humiliating of torments.

(a) The sufiering of crucifixion is the greatest and worst of all torments, says Cicero; reserved for pirates, thieves, criminals and slaves.

(b) All other tortures and punishments were added to it: scourging, carrying the cross to the place of execution, stripped naked, and ill-treated. After the actual crucifixion the breaking of the legs.

2. *The cross in Apostolic times:*

(a) St Paul has a different view: But what we preach is Christ crucified: to the Jews a discouragement, to the Gentiles mere folly; but to us who have been called, Jew and Gentile alike, Christ the power of God, Christ the wisdom of God (i Cor. i. 23-24).

3. *The cross in the early ages:*

(a) The sign of the Christian, the summary of his faith and his moral law; stimulus for mortification and even martyrdom.

(b) The liturgical rites are accompanied by the cross; baptisms, the breaking of the bread and so on.

(c) The Christians make the cross part of their daily life:

i. they make this sign on their foreheads, lips and heart; on leaving their homes, at rest or work;

ii. it appears on the coffins and tombs;

iii. it appears on jewels and ordinary utensils;

iv. after the victory of Constantine it appears on the shields of the soldiers, the standard, the crown of the emperors.

The cross, patrimony of the Christian

1. The cross must not be something external to the Christian life, it is an essential part of it.

(a) There is not, nor can there be, authentic Christianity without the cross;

(b) nor is there a true disciple of Christ who is without his share in it: If any man has a mind to come my way, let him renounce self, and take up his cross, and follow me (Matt. 16. 24).

2. On this Palm Sunday let us see in the procession an invitation on the part of the Church to follow our Lord. However, this invitation is accompanied by a stimulus; nothing less than our own triumph and the inestimable good which will come to us through the cross.

(a) In the cross is our salvation:

i. because by means of it the Lord has freed us from death and has opened the gates of heaven to us;

ii. the only key to eternal happiness is the cross and that is the symbolism of today's ceremony.

(b) In the cross is our life:

i. because it was the tree from which the life of the world burst forth;

ii. sanctifying grace can be preserved with difficulty without the cross;

iii. the more we live the cross the greater will be our sanctity.

(c) In the cross is our resurrection:

i. we have been translated from the kingdom of darkness, as St Paul says: to that of light, thanks to the cross;

ii. the cross is a pledge and a secure hope of our future resurrection.

B: Let us embrace the Cross

1. If the Apostles did not understand Christ when he spoke to them about the cross, of many Christians we can say with Thomas à Kempis: Jesus has many lovers of his heavenly kingdom, but few are willing to bear his cross. He has many that are desirous of comfort, but few of tribulation. He finds many companions of his table, but few of his abstinence. All desire to rejoice with him; few are willing to suffer with him. Many follow Jesus to the breaking of bread; but few to the drinking of the chalice of his passion (Bk. 2, c. 11).

2. Our desire should be to embrace the cross together with Christ. When we hear the Passion read this morning let us remember that:

(a) the glory which Christ expects of us is not that of a superficial piety which is inspired by sentiment,

(b) but the entire surrender of our hearts and wills to him . . . 'His will be done' must be our sentiment.

C: Acclaiming Christ

The procession with the palms—the triumph of the Lord

i. *The first Palm Sunday procession:*

(a) Described in the Gospel; it is a procession of triumph and a manifestation of the royal majesty of the Messias; a royalty which is humble and meek, but still a royal dignity.

(b) The acclamations were sincere but without depth. The people would abandon him a few days later and would cry: Crucify him. We have no king but Caesar (John 19. 15).

(c) It would be a worthy and fruitful meditation, this one, concerning the fickle nature of human praise. It is repeated many times in history.

i. those who are today in power may easily find themselves exiled tomorrow;

ii. it is a dreadful error to seek everything in the praises and acclamation of men;

iii. Christ, in accepting this praise, does no more than fulfil the will of his Father.

(d) We would do well to keep this in mind and seek God's will in all things; sometimes we shall succeed, at others we shall be failures from the world's point of view. But before God we shall have succeeded always because there is no more sure and safe victory than this, of those who do the will of God.

2. *Processions in the history of the liturgy:*

(a) On the Sunday before Easter there were morning offices in the church of the Crucifixion which was then called 'Martyrium'. At the seventh hour of the day, that is about one o'clock, the faithful came together at the garden of Gethsemane for practices of devotion which lasted two hours and consisted of hymns, psalms and antiphons.

(b) At the ninth hour they went up the slopes of the mount of Olives for more prayers and readings from the scriptures.

(c) At the eleventh hour the Gospel of the entry into Jerusalem by Jesus was sung and the people went in solemn procession, carrying palms and olive branches, singing the *Benedictus qui venit*. . . from Olivet to the church of the Resurrection, where vespers were sung and a prayer to the cross.

(d) This custom was followed everywhere in the Middle Ages, but without the blessing of the palms. It is a symbol of the triumph of Christ.

The symbolism of the palms

1. If Christians are content merely to be present at this ceremony singing and carrying palms, we cannot say that they really accompany Christ.

(a) Of many we may complain today, as we do of the Jews, that they were ready to assist at the glorious ceremonial but were not prepared to follow Christ in their lives.

(b) Religion is not a mere spectacle, even though, to honour Christ and God, the liturgy is adorned with spectacular ceremonial, such as no other religion on earth has ever known.

(c) Religion must show itself in the daily life of each one—that is what this procession with the palms should mean to us.

2. *The symbol of victory after the fight:*

(a) We may say that this is our yearly promotion to knighthood and martyrdom.

(b) Carrying these palms, we profess ourselves ready to manifest Christ to the world and ready to lay down our lives as did the martyrs, at least by means of our good works and our daily struggle against his enemies.

3. This will be our real homage to Christ and thus we shall complete our joyous cries today—see to it, O Lord, that thy people realize spiritually that which today they have celebrated exteriorly.

II. THE EPISTLE

A: He humbled himself

Humility

1. The most serious obstacle which we can oppose to the work of God is pride; on the other hand, humility makes us debtors to God's grace.

2. Humility is not a mere posture of silence, modesty and submission to men. It is principally a standing before God in truth.

(a) It is founded on the recognition of the sovereignty of God, the author of all good and on your own nothingness;

(b) from which it follows that the true expression of humility is submission to the will of God.

3. *Therefore pride is:*

(a) rebellion, despising of the law of God, affection for our own judgement, inordinate love of self, and our own estimation;

(b) by it we separate ourselves from God and rest, as our support, on nothing instead of on omnipotence;

(c) in that sense we frustrate the action of God and therefore it is said that God resists the proud and gives his graces to the humble (James 4. 6).

4. *The fact:*

The sin of Adam and of the angels took place through pride; the fall of other souls also has its root in the lack of humility.

Christ, the humble

1. The Master, who had to give us an example of how we should live, taught us especially that we should be humble.

2. Every step of his life is an eloquent testimony to this fact:

(a) Infancy:

Bethlehem with its poverty and simplicity; Nazareth, hidden and silent.

(b) Public life:

The baptism in the Jordan, where Christ presents himself as if he were just another sinner who had joined the throng (Matt. 3. 13). He avoids the acclaim of the people and they desire to make him king (John 6. 15).

He says. The son of man did not come to have service done to him; he came to serve others . . . (Mark 10. 45).

We see it particularly in the washing of the feet of his disciples (John 13. 4 11.)·

(c) In his Passion:

i. *his capture :* You have come out to my arrest with swords and clubs, as if I were a robber . . . (Matt. 26. 55);

ii. the blows in the house of Annas (John 18. 22);

iii. condemned as a blasphemer, by Caiphas and the Sanhedrin (Mark 14. 64);

iv. the mockery which followed (Luke 22. 63 ffi);

v. the humiliation in the house of Herod (Luke 23. 6-12);

vi. Barabbas is released in his stead and he is crucified between two thieves (Luke 23. 18).

3. *These are not the only humiliations of Christ:*

(a) As man he admitted that he was a creature, united to the Word of God with a saving mission.

(b) This made him hand himself and his will entirely to the Father, for which reason St Paul says: he dispossessed himself, and took the nature of a slave, fashioned in the likeness of men, and presenting himself to us in human form ... (Phil. 2. 7). The greatest humiliation of all was the Incarnation itself.

(c) From this fundamental attitude of Jesus come all the other manifestations of humility, his meekness, pardon for his enemies, sweetness—above all, his love.

Humility and love

i. It is difficult to know if, because he loved, he was humble, or because he was humble he loved :

(a) love and humility are inseparable—they were in Christ;

(b) the greatest manifestations of his love were accompanied by the greatest humiliations:

i. The Incarnation;

ii. The Passion;

iii. The Eucharist.

2. *Slavery is the greatest form of humility :*

(a) For that reason St Paul said that, on taking the nature of a slave, he dispossessed himself.

(b) The great act of humility of our Lady is expressed in these terms: Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

3. *Slavery is also the most perfect form of love:*

(a) St Thomas, commenting on those words of St John : Greater love than this no man hath . . . (John 15. 13), says that one of the ways of giving one's life for another is to become a slave for him.

(b) Here are the most excellent forms of love and humility, to become God's slave and our neighbour's.

4. There can be no true love in a heart which is not humble; such a one will love neither God nor his neighbour.

(a) He who loves is changed into the one loved; self-love causes a man to look to himself all the time, not to God or his neighbour;

(b) for which reason the Master recommended love and humility at one and the same time, to his disciples.

i. The washing of the feet was at once a symbol of love and of humility.

ii. The command is given to all: you in your turn ought to wash each other's feet (John 13. 14).

The standard of Christ

i. The unmistakable sign of the banner of Christ is humility:

(a) where this is wanting the spirit of Christ cannot be there;

(b) for which reason St Ignatius says that all other virtues follow humility'.

2. To acquire humility humiliations are essential:

(a) it is the road to humility as patience is to peace and reading to knowledge;

(b) if you want to be humble never reject humiliations; because if you cannot suffer them you will never become humble.

B: Obedient unto death

Obedience and humility

1. If we search St Paul's writings for expressions which discover the very soul of Christ for us, we shall come across such as these: he loved; he gave himself; he humbled himself; he dispossessed himself; he was made obedient; we may notice rhe strict relationship between these words.

2. The apostle expressly relates humility and obedience; for St Paul the great manifestations of the humility of Christ:

(a) are not isolated incidents, sporadic moments, however humble they may be;

(b) but rather the total expressions of the humility of Jesus are the Incarnation and the Passion (Phil. 2. 6-8), e.g. the substance of the whole life of Jesus.

3. But the Passion, with all the injuries and insults which it contained is not the principal root of Christ's humility; that is reserved for his complete and absolute obedience to his Father's will, which led him to accept the death of a malefactor on the cross, because it was part of that will. Therefore St Paul exclaims: he . . . accepted an obedience which brought him to death, death on a cross (Phil. 2. 8).

The life of Jesus: a life of obedience

1. I am coming—i.e. at the very moment of the Incarnation, he gave himself up to the most exact obedience to his Father's will—to do thy will, () God (Heb. io. 7).

2. In the hidden life he was subject to Mary and Joseph (Luke 2. 51).

3. In the public life he often refers to this absolute obedience to his Father:

(a) My meat is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish the task he gave me (John 4. 34).

(b) I cannot do anything on my own authority; I decide as I am bidden to decide and my decision is never unjust, because I am consulting the will of him who sent me, not my own (John 5. 30).

(c) No, but the world must be convinced that I love the Father, and act only as the Father has commanded me to act (John 14. 31).

(d) You will live on in my love, if you keep my commandments, just as it is by keeping my Father's commandments that I live on in his love (John 15. 10).

The Passion is, above all, obedience to the Father

1. Christ wanted to give us an example of obedience in arduous and difficult circumstances in his passion:

(a) Son of God though he was, he learned obedience in the school of suffering . . . (Heb. 5. 8).

(b) He learned obedience, not because he did not possess it before, but because, in the passion, he exercised it in a most perfect form, since in it he taught us how difficult it is at times to submit to the will of God and how meritorious; this virtue of obedience suffers all and withstands all, even the hardest trials, for God.

2. The confirmation of how difficult this was for Christ is provided by the agony in the garden: Father, if it pleases thee, take away this chalice from before me; only as thy will is, not as mine is (Luke 22. 2). We can notice here the effort of the human will of Christ to be in conformity with that of God.

3. The agony on the cross with its final 'It is consummated' represents the supreme adhesion of Christ to the Father in perfect obedience.

The obedience of Christ before the world

i. *The foundation of our redemption:*

(a) St Paul expresses this when he says: A multitude will become acceptable to God through one man's obedience, just as a multitude, through one man's disobedience, became guilty (Rom. 5. 19).

(b) In the whole of this passage of the Epistle to the Romans it is clear that the obedience of the second Adam is the cause of the justification of those men who are the heirs to the crime of the first Adam.

2. J *sublime teaching:*

(a) Christ embraced obedience in order to transmit it to us (St Ambrose).

(b) Are you looking for an example of obedience? Follow Christ, who became obedient to the Father even unto death (St Thomas, in *Symbol.).*

(c) The salvation of the world lies in obedience:

i. if we wish to travel towards God then we must unite our obedience to that of Christ;

ii. God's entire plan for us, so far as we are concerned, lies in our being obedient to his will;

iii. and now, his full achievement reached, he wins eternal salvation for all those who render obedience to him (Heb. 5. 9).

3. *A necessary teaching in our day too:*

(a) the root of all sin is disobedience; fundamentally all sin contains it;

(b) when the Pope complains that the world has lost the sense of sin he means that the human will disobeys God as if it were the most natural thing to do;

(c) this is a most grave evil;

(d) the rights of God over the free will of man are denied, while every effort is made to proclaim the full autonomy of man's will;

(e) the despising of the commands of God, the teachings of the Gospel and of the Church is every' day more extended.

4. *The lesson:*

(a) It is not our intention to prove that, in obedience, the full perfection of the human will really lies;

(b) but it is our intention to present the example of Christ as something vitally necessary in our day.

i. There is a triple gradation: God, Christ, the Church, Through the Church to Christ, through Christ to God.

ii. God sent his Son on to the earth saying: This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, to him, then, listen (Matt. 17. 5).

iii. Christ said to his Apostles: He who listens to you listens to me; he who despises you, despises me (Luke 10. 16).

iv. The one safe road to follow is to hear the teaching voice of the Church and to follow' the teachings of the Gospel.

III. THE GOSPEL

A: Sacrifice and Apostolate

The fruit of the Passion

1. On Palm Sunday something happened which is not recorded by St Matthew, although St John mentions it. And there were certain Gentiles among those who had come up to worship at the feast, who approached Philip, the man from Bethsaida in Galilee, and made a request of him. Sir, they said, we desire to see Jesus.

(a) They are the first fruits of the universal redemption, the first among those Gentiles to whom Paul will soon be preaching.

(b) Christ himself recognizes this when he says: The time has now come for the Son of Man to achieve his glory (John 12. 23).

2. The real explanation of this glory of Christ on earth does not lie in his own words, or his miracles; nor even in his mercy—it lies in his passion and death: a grain of wheat must fall into the ground and die, or else it remains nothing more than a grain of wheat; but if it dies, then it yields rich fruit *(ibid.* 24).

He is the grain of wheat, and as St Thomas says, the death of Christ brought rich fruit:

i. the remission of sins;

ii. the conversion of the Gentiles and eternal glory for all.

To die in order to live

1. The words of the Messias contain an elementary truth in the present economy of salvation, frequently forgotten or put on one side by Christians.

(a) It is impossible to be saved unless we unite our sufferings with those of Christ.

(b) In the thought of St Paul to the Hebrews, unless blood is shed, there is no remission of sins (Heb. 9. 22).

2. The words of Christ in reply to Philip have a very personal application. In this sense one must understand those other words: He who loves his life will lose it; he who is an enemy to his own life in this world will keep it (John 12. 25).

He who loves his life . . .

(a) Desiring for it every kind of material good, honours, riches, pleasures, and comforts, loses it for eternity.

(b) To put it another way, he who imagines that he is living in the worldly sense, is eternally dead.

i. On the contrary, he who is an enemy to his own life in this world . . . denying it those things which the world so desires, material goods, and embraces suffering, the cross and the struggle, will save it or keep it so as to live eternally.

ii. This idea of our death being a likeness to that of Christ is one which is frequently repeated in St Paul (e.g. Roni. 6. and 2 Cor. 4. 11).

The fruit of Holy Week

1. We are now at its beginning and the Church speaks to us of the Passion of Christ, as she will do frequently in these days which are to follow. We should be saturated with the passion in these days.

2. But we cannot be content with a mere contemplation of it.

(a) Let each one see how he or she is reproducing that passion in the daily life.

(b) If we wish to be saved our life too must be offered up on the altar of the cross—there is no other way (John 12. 24).

B: The Washing of the feet

Lessons from this scene

1. *Humility:*

At these last moments of his life there is a concentration in the Master which is clearly seen;

(a) there is a condensation of love in his heart;

(b) a plenitude of ideas in his mind;

(c) a depth in his words;

(d) a significance in all his actions.

2. Christ knew that his disciples would recognize all this later on, when he had left them. At the moment they were more concerned with what was to them, a practical question—who would be the greatest in the kingdom which he had announced as being near at hand. He would give them their lesson and us as well. Conscious as he is of his greatness as the Son of God made man (John 13. 3); conscious too, of his divine mission *(ibid.'),* knowing that, very soon now, he was to receive the homage due to him in heaven, he washes his disciples' feet.

(a) men whose weaknesses he well knew;

(b) among them there was one who would betray him;

(c) another who could deny him three times;

(d) all of them would run away and leave him alone to face death.

There are two lessons here

1. *One of humility:*

The fundamental Christian virtue without which there can be no true virtue (Matt. 11. 29; Ecclus. 10. 15).

2. *Another of complete purity:*

(a) Jesus uses this exterior washing as a sign of interior cleanliness;

(b) because he tells Peter that it is necessary if he is to have some part with Christ;

(c) because afterwards he will give them all the bread of life, for which great purity is necessary;

(d) it is a cleanliness which comes from the word of God put into actual practice (John 15. 3.)

Finally, there is yet a third lesson, that of charity

Christ insists that he has acted thus knowing his dignity and that we must do the same. Do you understand what it is I have done to you? You hail me as Master and Lord; and you are right, it is what I am. Why, then, if I have washed your feet, I who am the Master and the Lord, you in your turn ought to wash each other's feet. I have been setting you an example, which will teach you in your turn, to do what I have done for you. Believe me, no slave can be greater than his master, no apostle greater than he by whom he was sent. Now that you know this, blessed are you if you perform it (John 13. 12-17).

C: Judas and Avarice

The Theme

1. All the vices seem to have united to condemn Christ to death;
   (a) pride and envy of the Pharisees and scribes;
   (b) the avarice of Judas;
   (c) the sensuality of Herod;
   (d) the indecision and egoism of Pilate.

2. Now let us think of Judas.

Avarice

1. Those who would be rich fall into temptation, the devil's trap for them; all those useless and dangerous appetites which sink men into ruin here and perdition hereafter. The love of money is a root from which every kind of evil springs, and there are those who have wandered away from the faith by making it their ambition, involving themselves in a world of sorrows (1 Tim. 6. 9-10).

2. This is a good description of the misery of Judas.

(a) Judas was ambitious for money:

i. According to St Thomas, avarice can have for its object any kind of material goods, such as power, etc.

ii. It is probable that Judas became one of our Lord's disciples because he was attracted by the idea of a temporal kingdom in which he would make sure of being one of the principal ministers;

he is probably behind many of the complaints of the others that the kingdom is long in coming.

iii. But his avarice gradually localizes itself into a love for money.

(b) He who gives his heart to money does not think of quantities:

How many times we see people who are well off, sell their souls for a mere pittance.

The falls increase

1. First of all, he manages to become the administrator of the common purse—and how little there must have been in it! How did he manage it? Possibly by being careful at first but little by little the love of money for its own sake began to overcome him.

2. There is one step more—he begins to steal—he was a thief (John 12. 6).

3. He sees money in everything and the possibility of making himself a little richer because of it. Why should not this ointment be sold? It would have fetched three hundred silver pieces, and alms might have been given to the poor (John 12. 5). Had he robbed the poor before?

4. Judas has now fallen very low', he is a robber, a hypocrite and a murmurer.

Fallen to the lowest

1. There comes a moment when the thief loses all control.
   (a) His honour, friendship, prudence—all is lost.
   (b) He dares all, breaks with all, anything to fill his coffers.

2. He is envious, jealous, sees himself censured publicly at Bethania, the triumph of Palm Sunday does not end as he would have expected. Avarice overcomes him: What will you pay me for handing him over to you? (Matt. 26. 15).

3. *The fall of Judas is a fall which is:*
   (a) shameful: it is a traitor's act;
   (b) sad; he is an apostle;
   (c) shocking: he sells Christ;
   (d) miserable: for what they give him; the price of a slave.

He begins by looking for money, he ends by admitting the devil into his heart.

His faith wavers

i. Although his heart is hardened, the Lord, with his love for Judas ever present to his mind, does all that he can.

(a) At the Last Supper:

i. *He lets him see that he knows his secret thoughts* (Matt. 26. 25).

ii. *He expounds to him motives which should make him afraid:* woe upon that man by whom the Son of man is to be betrayed; better for that man if he had never been born (Matt. 26. 24).

iii. *He has recourse to extreme delicacy and specialfavours:* he gave him bread dipped in the sauce of the dish before him (John 13. 26)—a mark of special courtesy and favour—but to no avail; the devil entered into the heart of Judas (John 13. 27-30); he went out to betray his Master, 'and it was night' says St John; a phrase which almost allows us to see the figure of Judas clear against the night sky as he departs. It is night in the heart of Judas too.

(b) In the garden:

i. These were words which would have won over any other heart except that buried in the lust for gold—there is the call of friendship—My friend, on what errand art thou come? (Matt. 26. 50)—not because you are a friend at this moment, but because you have been in the past.

ii. *He makes Judas see the depths to which he has sunk:* On what errand art thou come?

iii. *The vileness of the means used:* Wouldst thou betray the son of man with a kiss?—in which he also shows Judas the dignity of him who is being betrayed.

2. *In his despair:*

(a) the farthest he goes is to think that he can undo the wrong done by returning the money.

(b) He could not see the other motives which might have led him to a salutary repentance. There is Mary; there is Peter weeping; there is Jesus going to his death for all mankind—but Judas does not understand.

(c) There is Jesus hanging from the tree of the cross; and at his side also hanging on a cross is a robber whose soul will, this day, be in paradise; and there, hanging from another tree, is the corpse of Judas.

The reward for treachery, and avarice

(a) the contempt of the priests and the Sanhedrin;
(b) hated by his own;
(c) cursed by God;
(d) without his money;
(e) with the devil in possession of his heart;
(f) the ignominy of the rope and the foul death.

D: The Sin of Peter

The lesson of the fall

1. Through the Gospel story we can uncover the motives which led to Peter's fall.

2. They should sene as a lesson to us.

Human judgements and those of Christ

1. Before dealing directly with the theme let us ask ourselves what would our judgement of Peter have been? W ould we have chosen him for the first Pope of the new Church? How would we have looked on his moral situation?

2. There is one fact which is quite clear—he committed a grave sin of apostasy' with all its attendant circumstances which made it even worse.

(a) Ingratitude in such sad moments.
(b) Infidelity] in one who had received the promise of the primacy.
(c) Bad example for others who were his subjects.

3. Yet Christ confirms him in his love and in his office afterwards; and Christ knew hearts and was not an accepter of persons.

4. How wrong human judgements can be! And usually are!

5. The fall of Peter should not serve to lower our idea of his sanctity, but should be a warning to all that we need prudence and caution.

The antecedents to the fall

1. We see them at the last supper.

2. Peter is enthusiastic in his love and over-ready to talk.

(a) He tries to persuade the Lord not to go to his death and receives a reprimand (Matt. 16. 22);
(b) he is the first to confess the divinity of Christ (Matt. 16, 16);
(c) he speaks on Tabor (Matt. 17. 4);
(d) when the disciples abandon their Master he is the first to express his allegiance (John 6. 68);
(e) he hears the announcement of the flight of the apostles and then:

i. *he speaks rapidly and without sufficient thought.* How many rash promises he makes and how boldly! But the causes for his fall are deeper yet:

ii. *Peter presumes:* and perhaps this is the real reason for it.

(f) In the whole of the discussion with our Lord never once does Peter ask for help and grace. He relies on his own strength with vehement protestations: Though all else should lose courage over thee, I will never lose mine (Matt. 26. 33). ... I will never disown thee, though I must lay down my life with thee *(ibid.* 35).

(g) Confident in his own powers, he does not even pray or watch: And he said to Peter, Had you no strength, then, to watch with me even for an hour? Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation ... (Matt. 26. 40-41).

i. Peter did not understand the need for vigilance and the danger which the natural human weakness implies for the soul.

ii. Jesus prayed while Peter slept—they were sleeping, overwrought with sorrow—surely even more motive for praying, in such moments of depression!

iii. Later he will realize it himself, because he says to all: Be sober and watch, for your adversary, the devil . . . (1 Peter 5. 8).

The immediate preparation for the fall

1. To follow Christ and die for him if necessary; a saintly and heroic position to adopt; to flee from the danger with prudence; there is another ascetic solution.

2. Peter, confident in his own powers, adopts a middle way, which is worse; he follows Christ afar off (Matt. 26. 58), that is, with tepidity, yet he dared to enter into the lion's mouth.

3. From one who is tepid, confident in his own powers and without prayer to help him; one who defies the danger, what else could be expected?

The fall

1. It is very grave; as we have already indicated.

2. It goes from bad to worse, increasing in gravity all the time.

(a) First he denies;

(b) then he denies with an oath;

(c) then he begins to curse and to swear that he does not know this man (cf. Matt. 26. 69-74).

3. What a difference between: Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God; and; I know nothing of the Man (Matt. 16. 15; 26. 74).

(a) In the first case it is not flesh and blood that has inspired Peter, but God himself (Matt. 16. 17);

(b) now Peter is alone with his own strength.

The tears

I. The picture would not be complete unless we meditate on Peter in tears.

(a) In the midst of all his defects he was generous and loving. One look from Jesus was enought to make him burst into tears and flee from the danger. We might ask where did he go? Probably to our Lady's feet, where alone he would find the courage to repent as he ought.

(b) After this he does not dare to say that he loves Christ more than the others; he will watch now, pray, and follow our Lord to death.

2. Let us end with some words of the new Peter, converted and repentant:

(a) Rather rejoice when you share in some measure the sufferings of Christ; so joy will be yours, and triumph, when his glory is revealed (i Peter 4. 13).

(b) The Lord does not find it difficult to save his true worshippers from their trials ... (2 Peter. 2. 9).

3. Lastly, we must learn the lesson ofcomprehension and compassion for our neighbours in their trials which we must learn from our own falls. This is the rule of government which St Peter gives us: Be shepherds to the flock... not tyrannizing each in his own sphere, but setting an example, as best you may, to the flock (1 Peter 5. 2-3).

E: Pilate: egoism and indecision

Sympathy for Pilate?

1. There is no reason for us to feel kindly towards Pilate for his efforts to free our Lord.

2. In the course of the Passion everyone has an end in view and acts accordingly; only Pilate acts against his better nature and against all his inclinations. He is the type of egoism and indecision.

3. Unchecked passions accused Jesus, but the one who sends him to his death is this vacillating, weak, egoist and coward, Pilate.

A weak man

i. The character of the weak man is to give in nearly always, but there comes a time when he bursts out, and then he becomes excessively cruel.

(a) At times Pilate gave way all along the line;

(b) at others he made the streets of Jerusalem run with blood.

2. *In the episode ofJesus:*

(a) he grants the body of the condemned;

(b) he gives way when they ask him to allow them to guard the body;

(c) yet he makes a great fuss over a small thing like the title on the cross.

3. He wants to avoid the problems which his justice is supposed to solve.

4. Yet he does not take any notice of the wise counsel of his wife.

Sceptical and superstitious

1. These two apparently opposite qualities are well joined in Pilate! And how many times we notice the same thing in others.

2. He hears that this Man claimed to be the son of God and he is afraid, remembering the greco-roman myths; he hears him say that he has come to preach the truth and he shrugs his shoulders.

3. What is truth? he asks, sceptically, as if he were one of the great philosophers of the day!

Compromises with justice

1. He is seated in his own tribunal;
   (a) he has the whole power of the empire behind him;
   (b) he despises the accusers;
   (c) he admits the innocence of the accused;
   (d) yet he does not set him free, which would have been the just thing to do.

2. He begins to compromise and temporize, trying to bargain Jesus against Barabbas.
   (a) One more step and we see the terrible torture of the scourging; I could find no substance in any of the charges you bring against him. ... I will scourge him, and then he shall go free (Luke 23. 14-17);
   (b) yet he is not above using our Lord for his own ends—for this purpose he sends him to Herod (Luke 23. 7-12).

The egoist

1. As soon as he hears the threat that he himself will be accused before Caesar, and foresees the danger that he may be removed from office, he at once crucifies the innocent victim.

2. A stupid expedient of washing his hands apparently satisfies his conscience.

3. But what he sought to avoid actually happened. He lost the favour of Caesar through ordering a massacre, he was called to Rome and deposed.

Is this our history?

1. Weak, compromisers, egoists?
2. Have we condemned our Lord?
3. Have we known how to defend the innocent?

F: Herod and impurity

The effects of impurity

i. Since we shall have occasion to deal more extensively with this subject later, we can content ourselves here with a summary of the effects of impurity:

(a) weakness of the will to the point of making it a slave to passion in spite of the awareness of the grave dangers, etc;

(b) clouds the mind, perverts taste, until the sensual part of life is reduced to one thing—pleasure; this is seen and sought for in everything.

Herod

1. The petty king of a soft court, an adulterer and incestuous.

2. *He has no will:*

(a) He fears and respects John the Baptist, but he puts him in prison; he continues to appreciate him, but sadly he has him beheaded to satisfy the whim of a dancing girl.

(b) Who was the really free man, John or Herod?

3. Herod reduced everything to pleasure (Luke 23. 8-11):

(a) Hearing that Jesus had been sent to him he was very pleased *(ibid.* 8):

i. because he has the Messias before him and may hear the truth? No!

ii. because he can amuse himself with his court;

iii. he wants a conjuring show from our Lord, some sign *(ibid.* 8), i.e. a miracle.

(b) He is curious—he asked our Lord many questions *(ibid.* 9).

(c) He is not interested in seeing that justice is done—only in pleasure.

Herod and Jesus

So Herod and his attendants made a jest of him, arraying him in festal attire out of mockery, and sent him back to Pilate (Luke 23.11).

(a) Vice, confronted with virtue, prefers to mock at it, calling them fools who practise it;

(b) the pagans called the Christians enemies of the human race for the same reason;

(c) today worldly people of all kinds think that chastity is impossible and call the virtuous man a fool.

Jesus and Herod

1. . . . but could get no answer from him (Luke 23. 9).

2. He replied to the priests, to Pilate and he even spoke to Judas.

3. Before Herod he is silent. I le knows that it is useless, because he would not understand.

4. The court and king who make game of the very God and Lord of creation deserve nothing better.

5. His sensuality is abhorrent to Christ.

No need for despair

There are two kinds of sinners:

1. Those who fall through weakness and wish to rise again.

(a) Jesus has come to save you. The smoking flax he will not extinguish; the bruised reed he will not break.

(b) There is the example of the woman of Samaria; who knows the circumstances which led her to go with that man who was not her husband ? Jesus talks to her!

(c) There are those who are deep in the mire, but at the same time they have a generous heart and are disposed to repent and weep. —Magdalen was one of these. Jesus defends her.

2. But there is another class:

(a) he who, deep in sin, hardens his heart; he has salvation so near him yet he mocks at it.

(b) Jesus despises him and keeps silent, as he did with Herod.

G: Women in the Passion

Introduction

1. In the passion of Jesus man and woman have a very different part to play.

(a) All those who intervene in these scenes to ill-treat Jesus are men:

The only exceptions are John at the foot of the cross, Simon of Cyrene, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea.

(b) There is no record ofany woman who attacked ourLord :

Or insulted him during his passion; on the contrary, they come out in his defence.

2. We shall not treat of Veronica, in order to limit ourselves to those mentioned in the Gospels; nor of Mary, his Mother, because she cannot be considered just as one of many.

The wife of Pilate

I. St Matthew gives us the story. Even as he sat on the judgement seat, his wife had sent him a message: Do not meddle with this innocent man; I dreamed today that I suffered much on his account (27. 19).

2. *The circumstances make this important:*

(a) She intervenes and warns her husband at the moment when the chosen people are crying out against Jesus and prefer him to Barabbas.

(b) She is a woman, and therefore of the weaker sex; she is a pagan, with no hope in the Messias; she is a Roman, and therefore looks with aversion on the Jews, still she overcomes her fear, defends Jesus and says that he is just, trying to dissuade her husband from any condemnatory sentence against him. Hers is the only voice raised in his defence in the whole course of this trial,

(c) Did she not merit the gift of Faith? The Greek Church honours her as a saint—perhaps not without reason. She has been called Qaudia Procla or Procula.

(d) With this warning Pilate also received grace to strengthen him;

i. it is clear that, from this moment, he redoubles his efforts to save Jesus;

ii. but his weakness and cowardice overcome him, and he condemns our Lord.

The women of Jerusalem

I. St Luke gives us the scene (23. 27 ff.).

(a) Jesus was followed by a great multitude of the people, and also of women, who beat their breasts and mourned over him *{ibid.')*.

(b) These women were from Jerusalem, as we can gather from our Lord's words; there is a rabbinical tradition to the fact that there existed in the city' an association of pious women who used to attend the condemned, giving them a stupifying drink, which would serve as an anaesthetic.

2. While the men blaspheme and insult, these women, whoever they w'ere, feel sincere compassion for Jesus and manifest their courage by their tears.

3. Their compassion was recompensed by the Saviour, who joined himself to their maternal sorrow and expressed his own sorrow at what is soon to happen in their city (Luke 23. 28-31).

The women on Calvary'

i. Of all the people Jesus saw from his throne of the Cross there was just one small group of his friends—most of them women (John 19. 25; Matt. 27. 55-56; Mark 15. 40-41).

2. These women are a model:

(a) of fidelity in the hour of humiliation;

(b) of courage in the hour of danger;

(c) of apostles who defended Jesus when the hour of accusation and calumny comes.

3. Finally, St Matthew (27. 61) tells us that these women remained at the tomb and so their fidelity went even beyond the moment of his death.

Conclusion

1. When the hour of the last judgement arrives Jesus will pay back his debt of gratitude to all those of his Mystical Body who have done works of charity.

2. These holy women will then receive the reward they deserve for having stood by him in the dark hours of persecution.

IV. THE WAY OF THE CROSS

First Station: Jesus is condemned to death

The Scene

1. The Antonia tower, where Pilate has his judgement seat. The tribunal is set up, seated in his judicial throne is the representative of Caesar, before him the prisoner, Christ, clothed in the purple garment, crowned with thorns, his garments bathed in blood and his face disfigured ... a picture of modest humility.

2. St John says: When Pilate heard them speak thus he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgement seat, in a place called Lithostrotos; its Hebrew name is Gabbatha. It was now about the sixth hour, on the eve of the paschal feast. See, he said to the Jews, here is your king. But they cried out, Away with him, away with him. Crucify him. What, Pilate said to them, shall I crucify your king? We have no king, the chief priests answered, except Caesar. Thereupon he gave Jesus up into their hands, to be crucified (John 19. 13-16).

3. Who has given up Jesus to death? Five wills, says St Augustine, have taken their share in it.

You gave him up, Judas, out of avarice

I. Avarice is not the greatest of all sins, but it is certainly at the root of all (1 Tim. 6. 10).

(a) With what facility the desire for riches penetrates into the hearts even of good people. Sometimes one can find traces of this evil in institutions which have been founded for good purposes.

(b) 'Everything obeys money'; for everything money is necessary; it is impossible to prescind from it, but how easy it is to have an inordinate affection for it!

(c) Avarice led Judas away from the company of Christ and towards his treason.

2. St Ignatius, in the meditation called 'The two standards', presents riches as the first and universal temptation which the devil makes use of, in order to get man to pass on afterwards to love of honours, pleasures and pride.

(a) The Scriptures give us a good picture of the life of the avaricious man (Eccles. 2. 5-12).

(b) The Christian life is far different, and the followers of Christ do wonderful things precisely because they despise gold and silver (Ecclus. 31. 8-11).

3. Let us ask God for the courage to despise riches, and to love poverty and the practice of spiritual poverty, in his mercy perhaps actual poverty. Let our riches be his poor; and our despising of earthly wealth the guarantee that we shall remain in the company of Christ, to follow him to death.

The Scribes and Pharisees condemned him, as did the Jews, through hatred and envy

1. The gravest sin, undoubtedly, was that of the Scribes and Pharisees, who sought his death directly.

2. Not for gold or silver, but through hatred and envy.

(a) These hypocrites pretended that they were zealous for the honour of Caesar, since Christ wanted to make himself a king.

(b) They pretended that they sought the glory of God, in which Christ wanted to share, since he made out that he was the son of God.

(c) They pretended love for the people; they represented Christ as a seducer, accusing him of eating and drinking with publicans and sinners.

3. Christ, comments St Augustine, said to them on one occasion:

(a) I did many good works among you, for which of them do you wish to kill me?

(b) I lightened your burden of sickness; cured your weaknesses, preached the kingdom of God to you, I did not hesitate, like a good doctor, who came to heal your infirmities, to reprehend you for your vices.

(c) But you, Jews, killed him. When? You killed him with the sword of your tongues when, without pity, you cried out against him, Crucify himl crucify him!

Pilate condemned him

1. Pilate did not represent either avarice or envy, nor even hatred. Pilate is the type of the world; he does not love the Father, he loves himself.

2. The pride of life, ambition, the desire for honours and power are all there in Pilate.

(a) To this passion he subordinates his greatest duties; it is weakness, cowardice, desertion and—final treachery—injustice.

(b) He admits the innocence of the accused and tries to set him free, but in spite of that innocence he has him scourged.

i. *He tries to find a mid-way path between justice and sin :* and he does not find it in the cold calculation of his passion.

ii. *He compromises with injustice :* it is impossible to compromise with passion, less still with hatred; nor with the world.

(c) He did not try to do good, but simply thought of his own profit all the time.

(d) Between God and Caesar on that occasion he elected the service of Caesar, with dreadful results for himself.

(e) At the bottom he did not care for anyone, not for God or for Caesar—he was intent on finding a way out for himself, even at the price of the death of this innocent victim.

You gave him up to death, heavenly Father

1. You gave him up for love of the world. God so loved the world that he gave up his only-begotten Son . . . (John 3.16) God loved his adopted sons so much that he was willing to give up his natural Son to save them.

2. Let us raise up our eyes to heaven full of confidence in the mercy of such a Father.

(a) If he gave up his Son for us, what can he deny us ?

(b) Through that gift we have come to be adopted sons of God ; our spirit should not be that of miserable slaves, but of free men, the spirit of sons of God and heirs to the kingdom.

(c) the Father gave his Son to indicate the way we should travel to him ; the way of the cross, first because the inheritance we hope for is only reached through the cross and sufferings of Christ, who opens the way for us; only we must share his sufferings if we are to share his glory (Rom. 8. 17).

He gave himself up for love of us and in obedience to his Father's will

1. .. . who loved me and gave himself up for me (Gal. 2. 20).

2. He did not wish to present himself as God.

(a) He offered himself as man to us, and accepted an obedience which brought him to death, death on a cross (Phil. 2. 8).

(b) He gave himself freely, because he wished to do so. On several occasions he had escaped from his enemies when they wished to catch him. In the garden, with a word, he had them all flat on their faces.

(c) Only one thing could overcome him and bind him—love. Love led him to Calvary and to the cross. Love and obedience,

which is a form of love. Father . . . only as thy will is, not as mine is (Matt. 26. 39).

(d) That charity which Christ shewed to us when he gave himself up on our behalf.

3. There you see him in the praetorium, fulfilling the purpose which he had freely chosen to fulfil.

(a) There you have the perfection of love, the summary of the whole Gospel: the love of God and the love of men.

(b) All the rest—Judas, the Scribes and Pharisees, Pilate and the world—they are only instruments which God is using to fulfil the free will of his son, who is determined to die for men, to open the gates of heaven.

Second Station: The Cross is laid on Jesus

The Cross: sword of division

1. The cross came to meet Jesus as he awaited it that morning in the praetorium.

2. The crowd makes way for it in silence.

3. It appears to divide the multitude symbolically:
(a) it divides the history' of the world into two parts;
(b) it divides humanity into two camps; its enemies and its friends;
(c) for all eternity it will divide the good men and angels from the wicked, on the day of judgement. It will be Christ's sceptre on that day (Matt. 24. 30).

The Cross: a sign of contradiction

1. Evil will smile at the idea of a king who carries for his sceptre the wood on which he is to be nailed.

2. Piety will venerate this wood, whose image will be the ornament of the crowns of emperors.

Christ and the cross

1. Here now is the cross before the eyes of him who has been waiting so long for it:
(a) with what love he contemplates it; with what love he extends his arms to embrace it!
(b) with what love he takes it upon his shoulders and begins the sad journey to Calvary!

2. If we are his disciples, then our place is behind that cross, cartying our own smaller crosses with bravery' and decision like his.
(a) Let each one take his own cross with love; for one sickness, for another poverty, for another the lack of parents, for another widowhood.

(b) Another will have to shoulder the daily burden of an unhappy life, another must deal with insults, lack of comprehension, ingratitude, injustice, abandonment, weariness of life.

The Christian and the cross

1. Let us accept the cross cheerfully for three reasons:

(a) it comes from God; men cause it or offer it to us as instruments of his providence;

(b) we deserve the cross—and a much heavier one—for our sins;

(c) in bearing the cross willingly we alleviate somewhat the sufferings of Christ, whose shoulders are burdened with the heaviest cross of all.

2. Let us not try to escape from the cross. If we do it will persecute us, pursue us, reach us and beat us flat to the ground in submission.

(a) Let us go out boldly to meet it.

(b) In the cross is our salvation; our peace, our life. On the cross is our triumph.

(c) Hail! O Cross; only hope of life!

Lord, let me deny myself. Lord, let me carry my cross daily. Let me follow you to Calvary; let me die happy on the bed of the cross. Lord, let this cross be my sceptre too, and my eternal triumph in thy kingdom.

Third Station: Jesus falls the first time

The fall

1. We do not know the exact road Jesus followed from the praetorium to Calvary.

2. Possibly, as some think (tradition does not determine the fact with certainty) it was as he crossed the dried up bed of the little stream that Christ stumbled on the rough stones and fell to earth with the cross.

The significance of this fall

1. What spiritual meaning can we find in this first fall?

(a) Our first fall into mortal sin; let us remember, if we can, the time and the circumstances.

(b) Let us remember, too, the last time we have offended him gravely.

(c) Between these two dates is the whole of my sinful life. Let us think of that period for a moment.

2. Let us also allow' a sweet sorrow to overcome us, a sorrow which is tender, humble and above all full of loving confidence:

(a) full of love and gratitude to Christ, now prone on the earth under the weight of mv sins;

(b) thanks to this fall I ana now able to stand on nay feet;

(c) I live in God's grace and peace, reconciled to him by Christ.

3. Lord, never to sin again!

(a) No, that is too little, Lord. W ith what can I pay the debt I owe vou?

(b) What can I do to naake you better known and loved by others; that they may not offend you, and if they do, that they may return to vou?

(c) A necessary and a personal question:

i. What have I done for Christ?

ii. What am I doing now for Christ?

iii. What will I do for him in the future?

Fourth Station: Jesus meets his Mother

The silence of Scripture

a. What did Mary do on the night of Holy Thursday and the morning of Good Friday? The Gospel tells us nothing, nor does tradition. Therefore we are limited to private revelations, which have not the force of Scripture, but which are not forbidden by the Church. Such are the revelations of Catherine Emmerich, an Augustinian nun of Agnetenberg in Westphalia, who died in the odour of sanctity in 1824. She had visions of the Passion.

Mary and her son

1. This revelation tells us that Mary remained in the upper room when Jesus and the apostles went out to the Garden. The last to say goodbye to her was St John, and Mary asked him to keep her informed of what happened that night.

2. John, after the arrest of Jesus, followed him at a distance and entered the house of Caiphas. Then he went back to the upper room and told Mary what had happened. Together they made their way through the deserted streets towards the house of Caiphas.

3. On arrival they were about to enter when the door was thrust violently open and a man came out, weeping bitterly. It was Peter. 'Peter, what have they done with my son?' Mary asks him. 'They have condemned him to death and I have denied him three times', replied Peter, still in tears.

(a) Happy Peter who confessed and wept for his sins!

(b) Happy are we, too, if we have confessed ours and wept for them!

(c) Unhappy those who, like Judas, prefer to remain in sin and shut themselves up away from the fountain of mercy.

The meeting

1. John did not leave the Mother of God. He accompanied her throughout the passion.

(a) With caution and prudence he made sure that she would be as near as possible to her son.

(b) After Jesus entered the praetorium John led Mary to the side street through which he would have to pass on the road to Calvary.

(c) This is the moment when we, carrying the cross behind our Lord, meet her on our way. The immense sorrow on her face seems to speak to us: O ye who pass by the way, consider and see if there is a sorrow like unto my sorrow! Pass on, Pass on! While I remain here alone.

2. Not alone, O Mother! because our hearts arc with you. Let us leave our good resolutions here at the feet of Mary as we continue on the road to Calvary. She does not accuse us; it is our own conscience that does that.

You are our Mother, because we are your sons.

(a) We are sons because we are other Christs.

(b) We are other Christs because we are in the state of grace.

(c) If there is anyone who is not in that state, let him make a good resolution to confess his sins; at least we can offer Mary that consolation.

3. And you, O Mother: turn your eyes of mercy towards us, poor banished children of Eve.

(a) See in us the image of your son;

(b) we are part of his Mystical Body;

(c) today we are his by grace; grant that, tomorrow, we may be his in eternal glory.

Fifth Station: Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry his Cross

The Gospel tells us the story of what happened

1. They forced a passer-by who was coming in from the country, to carry it, one Simon of Cyrene, father of Alexander and Rufus ... (Mark 15. 21).

2. The weight which bowed Jesus down did not decrease very much:

(a) but at least he did not have to make such an effort to pull the heavy burden along;

(b) the wood, bumping over the stones and the rough roads, caused great agony to all the wounds of his body, which opened once again.

The lesson of Simon

i. Let us also be like Simon, and help our brothers to carry their daily crosses; thus we shall have fulfilled the law of Christ.

(a) Do not be indifferent to the sufferings of others (the parable of the good Samaritan, Luke io. 30-37).

(b) Let us help one another, console one another, practise charity one towards another.

2. Simon was surprised at this strange obligation which had been so suddenly thrust upon him of carrying a cross, something he had not thought of when he set out.

(a) Let us carry the cross for our brethren a little each day.

(b) This life is a bitter road to travel, and we shall come across many who are unhappy, down-hearted, perhaps flat on the ground.

(c) Let us not think of ourselves, but of others, with thoughts of mercy and loving-kindness.

3. Remember your brother who is in need. One of the manifestations of love is this care for others, and it is a great help in time of distress.

(a) Visit the poor and the sick.

(b) The effects of your present charity go back two thousand years, and comfort Jesus in his sad journey to Calvary.

4. Do not wait for a chance meeting with one in distress—look for the occasion even' day—there will be plenty of them.

Sixth Station: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

The reality and the symbolism

1. Who is this woman? She has no family, no name, no nation. We know nothing about her—Veronica merely means 'the true image'.

2. Did she exist? Yes. She is both a reality and a symbol.

(a) That she existed is taught to us by a very ancient tradition.

(b) The Christian instinct has given her a symbolic value.

Veronica is every pious woman

i. She is the personification of the female spirit of all times, ages and social classes;

(a) symbol of all the kindness of women to Christ;

(b) of the tenderness and gentleness with which they have always served him in his mystical body.

2. Veronica cannot lift our Lord up from the ground; she cannot carry the cross behind him; but love and pity will always find ways and means of helping, and consoling.

(a) She breaks through the crowd and offers to Christ the linen cloth, to wipe his face;

(b) Christ takes it in his free hand and passes it across his face, then returns it to her;

(c) returned home she sees on the linen the impression of that face, which she will keep before her all the days of her life and, at her death, leave to Mary, the Mother of Christ. She, in her turn, gave it (according to a pious tradition) to St John, from whom it passed to the Church.

3. In how many souls the piety of a woman has reproduced the image of our Lord!

4. Yes, Veronica will continue her task through the ages, while man exists:

(a) she is in the hospital wards, at the sick bed;

(b) she is on the battle-fields of the world, taking the place of mothers, and wives and daughters;

(c) she is in the prisons, bringing God's comfort into that atmosphere of monotony and boredom. Thus she brings once more to the human heart some small spark of hope in the darkness, some small confidence in the real brotherhood of men;

(d) she is in the home, looking after the family with care and diligence, healing the wounds of daily life:

i. in her husband, who has to meet the exterior world and fight against it;

ii. in her children, she binds up the first scratches caused by their contact with life;

iii. the wounds of impiety and injury in all her family.

5. She is gentle and delicate—but she is also strong.

Veronica, symbol of prayer

1. Prayer cleans the face of Christ.

2. Where? In our own souls. We have that image impressed on our hearts as on a coin that of our ruler.

3. How disfigured it is in so many Christians.

(a) Inordinate appetites dirty that image and stain it in so many souls, even those of the pious (St John of the Cross).

(b) By prayer and mortification the soul cleanses itself and once again that image appears in all its beauty.

Seventh Station: Jesus falls the second time

Christ again flat on the ground

i. Our Lord falls once again, more dramatically this time, under the heavy weight he has to carry. His body, weakened by all that he has gone through, cannot carry this burden even with the

help of Simon. His will urges him on to Calvary, but his body cannot obey that impulse.

2. Let no one feel despair or moral tiredness, even though at times the body gives way under the strain of the battle.

The spiritual meaning

This second fall of Jesus surely represents our repeated falls into sin.

(a) Our good resolutions were, no doubt, sincere.
(b) Why did we not fulfil them?
(c) Let us discover that reason and remember it.

The three reasons for repeated falls

1. *Abandonment of the spiritual life:*

(a) There was some slackness in our exercises of piety; we were careless about prayer, the source of light and strength; we neglected to receive communion, that bread of the strong;

(b) we neglected the protection of the saints, especially that of Man', the Mediatrix of all graces. We forgot to ask the help of our guardian angel or the protection of the saints;

(c) we began to be tepid in our practices of religion—a dangerous state always.

2. *Falling back into occasions of sin:*

(a) you placed yourself voluntarily in the occasion of sin;
(b) admit it with sorrow;
i. you went back to that place which does you so much harm;
ii. you took up that book, that magazine, which weakens your faith or excites your passions;
iii. you went with bad companions;
iv. you breathed again the atmosphere of the world which, after dulling the conscience, saps the will.

3. *Without spiritual direction:*

(a) you did not show yourself to the priest; you did not let him see your wounds or tell him of your dangers;

(b) Christ told the lepers to show themselves to the priests (Matt. 8. 4) to make us understand the importance and efficacy of their spiritual power; the fatherly advice of the minister of Christ can help us to avoid sin—if we seek it;

(c) you were not sincere with your spiritual director; perhaps you did not even visit him.

I shall arise

I. Weep—but do not be discouraged:

(a) say with the prodigal son: I will arise and go to my Father (Luke 15. 18);

(b) throw yourself once more into God's arms;

(c) return to confession;

(d) there is prepared for you the ring and the best robe—that of grace. There God will put shoes on your feet—as a symbol of your good will. Your Father's embrace is waiting there for you, and you will feel yourself bathed in his loving tears (Luke 15. 22-24).

2. And may the Father of all mercy, through these repeated falls, instil into your heart the spirit of mercy for your brother, that you may treat him with the same kindness; that you may not take scandal at his repeated falls; that you may forgive, if perhaps he injures you, not seven times, but seventy times seven—that is, always; that you may not issue a definitive sentence against anyone. It is one thing to condemn the sin; quite another to condemn the sinner.

3. He who stands, let him see to it that he does not fall:

(a) when you see your brother fall, then try to help him up again;

(b) your brother's fall should remind you that, if you are now on your feet, it is not through your own power, but through the grace and strength you have freely received;

(c) let us all be merciful to the fallen, for blessed are the merciful—they shall obtain mercy.

Eighth Station: Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem

The Gospel story

1. St Luke says: Jesus was followed by a great multitude of the people, and also of women, who beat their breasts and mourned over him; but he turned to them, and said, It is not for me that you should weep, daughters of Jerusalem; you should weep for yourselves and for your children (23. 27-29).

(a) It is proper to St Luke, the Evangelist of women, to recall this tender scene.

(b) He is also the Evangelist of God's mercy (cf. Chap. 15).

2. The whole scene is full of tenderness and compassion on both sides:

(a) the women weep for the injustice done against one who is innocent;

(b) Christ has compassion on these poor women because of the terrible sufferings which await them and their children.

3. What sublime generosity this is; that Christ should forget his own pain in order to console others.

Collective punishments and catastrophes

i. These words make us think of those collective chastisements which God allows to inflict the whole human race from time to

time; those days when the God of battles takes his rod into his hand and breaks nations as one would break clay vessels (Ps. 2. 9).

2. This idea is a very useful one to remember in our modern civilization:

(a) Christ weeps for a great collective crime: the infidelity of his chosen people;

(b) modem civilization has heard the words of Christ, through the Popes, many times, but has not listened to their warnings:

i. Leo XIII called man's attention to the crime calling to heaven for vengeance—that of defrauding the labourer of his wages.

ii. St Pius X saw the great war approaching and warned men of it.

iii. Pius XI warned them again that, if social justice were not put into effective practice, then nothing could avoid revolution which would come on society.

iv. Pius XII constantlv reminded us that the new Attila is already within the gates and that only heroic sacrifices will save the modem world.

3. The Popes have always related the lack of social justice and brotherly charity with the collective catastrophes which have struck civilization. We should all do our part to remedy these evils before it is too late.

Ninth Station: Jesus falls the third time

Scandal

We may see, in this third fall, those falls which our evil conduct cause in our brethren. Let us see in it the condemnation of our scandalous lives.

Woe to the world, for the hurt done to consciences! It must be that such hurt should come, but woe to the man through whom it comes! (Matt. 18. 7).

We live in an era of great public scandals. Scandal is the weapon the devil has always used to destroy the consciences of the old Catholic nations—scandals of all kinds.

1. *Scandals of women:*

Lack of modesty in dress and conduct. We may try to close our eyes to it or excuse it under the pretext of fashion; but that is only a subterfuge and we know it.

(a) The young girl is pulled by two tendencies which she must learn to control:

i. her natural desire to be attractive;

ii. her desire to follow the current fashions.

She should also think of the danger she is liable to involve others, and have a delicate conscience in this matter.

2. *Scandals of men:*

(a) In the home:

How often a home is destroyed by scandal on the part of the man, either because of his religious indifference or tepidity; or perhaps through drink or other vices.

(b) In business:

i. Catholics should be specially careful about this in all their employments;

ii. there are scandals in public life through social or political ambition;

iii. scandals in business through dishonesty or positive fraud.

3. *Social scandals:*

(a) that unchecked ambition for riches or honours which has led some Catholics to have that double conscience of which the Popes have warned us;

(b) woe to them who have one conscience for their homes and another for the office or business;

(c) one conscience for their own family and another for their workmen or servants.

4. *By social scandals we contribute:*

(a) to the weakening of the faith in others, especially among the workers;

(b) to prepare the way for subversive propaganda which will lead others away from the church and against the State;

(c) to a weakening in the prestige of the Church, being Catholics in name only.

5. *The weight of scandal:*

(a) it was not the weight of the cross alone that made him fall; it was the weight of our scandal;

(b) through his mind (as in the Garden) there passed in review all the sins of scandal committed by those whom his blood would have redeemed at the moment of their baptism;

(c) if he did not say it in so many words on this occasion, his whole attitude reveals his thoughts—Woe to the world because of scandals.

Tenth Station: Jesus is stripped of his garments

We have reached Calvary

I. The soldiers prepare Jesus for the crucifixion:

(a) For the second time their hands strip him of his clothing:

The first time was in the court of the pretorium (Matt. 27. 28). The outer cloak is easily removed; but the inner garment, woven

in one piece, is more difficult, because they have to take it oft'over his head.

(b) The pain was acute:

i. The tunic would have stuck to his wounded body.

ii. The rough soldiers, on tearing it off, would open once more all the wounds of the scourging, which would cause a fresh wave of pain through the whole of his body.

iii. As they took it off over his head the crown of thorns would be moved too, some thorns being torn from the flesh and others sticking in; both caused him increased pain.

2. Christ remained there, naked before the gaze of the crowd:

(a) some were his enemies and rejoiced at the sight;

(b) others were his friends, and it pained them to see him like this, exposed to the public gaze.

Impure spectacles

1. We must deplore, as we contemplate this scene, the impurity which, nowadays, is deliberately introduced into all kinds of public spectacles:

(a) it is to be found on the radio and television;

(b) newspapers, magazines and pornographic literature of all kinds are on public sale and can be picked up by all, even young people, to whom they do a great deal of harm.

2. We must not merely deplore this but also react against it with all our strength, both by a public campaign of Church and State, and also in private.

3. Nowadays the whole atmosphere of our civilization is corrupted by sensuality7. We must not forget that modesty in such things is the best defence of purity7.

4. *What can we do?*

(a) As citizens it is our public duty' to call to the attention of the competent authorities any public breach of morals which we may happen to observe;

(b) we should be most careful not to admit into our homes any literature whatsoever which may breathe this spirit;

(c) parents must be especially careful to see to it that their children are not touched by this modern contamination; not merely by forbidding bad literature, but also by providing them with books which are both interesting and good morally.

The spiritual stripping

i. *Virtuous habits:*

Let us ask our Lord, by this cruel stripping of his garments, that he give us the grace to dress ourselves always in habits of virtue, and never voluntarily to strip ourselves of them by mortal sin.

2. On the other hand, we might well ask him, too, for the grace to strip ourselves of all habits of vice, especially of our affection for those sins and occasions of sin which have been our downfall so many times in the past.

Eleventh Station: Jesus is nailed to the Cross

1. *The crucifixion:*

(a) The cross is placed on the ground. There are in it four small holes, indicating the places for the nails, one at the extremity of each arm and two for the feet. Christ is laid on the cross.

(b) We can imagine the scene without dwelling on its horrid details too much. The right hand extended, the measure taken, the nail placed against the wrist and the first dreadful blow, dulled by the flesh as the nail pierces his hand. An intense shudder runs through the sacred Body on the Cross. Now the other hand is drawn into position and the scene is repeated. Then it is the turn of those sacred feet which have so often sought out the sinner and the sick. The cross is raised up and dropped into the hole prepared for it. There it is fixed, and Christ the victim hangs between earth and heaven.

2. *In the Church:*

(a) Christ crucified offers himself to the sight of the whole world; that of the first Good Friday and for all ages since then;

(b) every Good Friday until the end of the world thousands of priests will offer the representation of Christ crucified, not to the mocking and jeers of his enemies, but to the adoration and devotion of the faithful;

(c) from the lowest place—all that our sins have merited for us—let each one of us contemplate Christ on his cross:

i. *here is the Saviour of the world:* the lamb of God who came to take away sin;

ii. *here is my Saviour too:* thanks to whom I have been redeemed from my sins. What return shall I make to him for all his sufferings on my behalf?

3. *Physical pain:*

(a) Let no one be discouraged or feel cowardice when faced with physical pain, or with the possibility of death.

(b) Let us embrace any pain we may have to suffer at this moment, and let us accept in our hearts any that may come our way in the future. Let us prepare ourselves now to suffer it willingly in union with Christ.

(c) Let us even look for it by bodily mortification in satisfaction for our sins.

(d) St Paul says: Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the origin and the crown of all faith, who, to win his prize of blessedness, endured

thc cross and made light of its shame, Jesus who now sits on the right of God's throne (Heb. 12. 2). That is our example and model.

Twelfth Station: Jesus dies on the Cross

Calvary

1. We can reconstruct the scene in our imagination. Jesus is there, with his arms stretched out as if to embrace the whole world. On each side of him hang the thieves; at the foot of the cross are his Mother, St John and the holy women. In another group the soldiers commanded by the centurion are dividing his garments by casting lots. The Scribes and representatives of the chief priests are mocking him and jeering at him.

2. Christ on his cross suffers as a lamb, teaches as a shepherd, pardons as a judge and dies as a redeemer. He does not answer the jeers of his enemies, but he does speak: words of mercy for men and acceptance of his Father's will.

The Seven Words

I. *First word:*

Father, forgive them; they do not know what it is they are doing (Luke 23. 34).

(a) Words of mercy:

Christ judges with love those who crucified him without mercy.

i. he does not make their sin graver;

ii. he does not excuse them, but he diminishes the gravity by looking for the one thing which can weaken the case against them. They did not have full knowledge of what they did.

(b) Lord, you act very differently from the way I act:

i. I always exaggerate the offences committed against me;

ii. I attribute bad faith where there is none;

iii. I distort the facts and seek for vengeance.

2. *Second word:*

I promise thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise (Luke 23. 43).

(a) A word of mercy and clemency:

He is repeating the lesson of the whole Gospel—that of love.

(b) Lord, through this word of thine, grant me full confidence in you even to the last moment of life.

i. however great my sins have been, your mercy is infinitely greater;

ii. the gate of heaven remains open so long as the soul remains in the body;

iii. one word, one act of perfect contrition, is enough to wipe away a life-time of sin.

(c) **Lord, let me not abuse your goodness:**

i. may I repent while there is still time to be able to pay you at least part of the debt of my sins;

ii. let me not be so unfortunate as to despair, or so miserable as to abuse your mildness.

3. *Third word:*

Woman, here is thy son . . . This is thy mother (John 19. 26).

(a) **Love continues to inspire Christ on the cross:**

i. *A love offilial piety towards his mother.* He does not forget his family duties.

ii. *Love for humanity represented in John.* The Mystical Body was born with Christ in the stable; its solemn proclamation came from the throne of the Cross.

(b) **Let us not be unworthy sons of such a mother:**

And if we should lose confidence in Christ let the maternal heart of Mary be a refuge which will lead us, full of repentance, to the feet of her crucified son.

4. *Fourth word:*

My God, my God, Avhy hast thou forsaken me? (Matt. 27. 46).

(a) **The first word of complaint from the cross:**

i. *the first,* the apparent abandonment by his Heavenly Father, is a summary of all spiritual sufferings;

ii. *the second,* I thirst, is a summary of all bodily suffering.

(b) By both of them he intends to show us the reality of his suffering; he suffers as man in both body and spirit.

(c) He wished to deny himself voluntarily of all the consolations which he could so easily have received from his Father at this moment.

(d) Cannot we also see in these words, the first verse of Ps. 21, a repetition of his Messianic claim? Quite possibly, as the whole Psalm deals with his passion and death in a manner which is so clear as to be impossible to deny.

5. *Fifth word:*

I thirst (John 19, 28):

(a) **It can have a mystical meaning:**

i. the thirst for souls which always afflicted Christ and which increased at this solemn moment;

ii. the desire to quench our thirst by that spiritual water w-hich he so often promised (John 7. 37).

(b) **But it also has a real sense—he was thirsty, physically:**

i. this was one of the most terrible of the torments of those who were crucified;

ii. it is the summary of all his physical torments.

(c) There is one more reason—there was still one prophecy which had to be fulfilled; the vinegar and gall had to be drunk—when that had been done there was no more left for him to do (Luke 18. 31).

6. *Sixth word:*

It is achieved (John 19. 30).

(a) Everything has been done—this is not a finishing which implies weakness or failing strength but one of perfection and plentitude.

i. the prophecies have all been fulfilled;

ii. he has finished the work which brought him into the world.

(b) Two missions filled the heart of Jesus all his life; that of redemption and that of teaching; twice he said that they had been achieved:

i. *once at the end of the supper.* I have exalted thy glory on earth by achieving the task which thou gavest me to do . . . I have made thy name known to the men whom thou hast entrusted to me . . . (John 17. 4-6).

ii. *now here on Calvary.* The perfection of his redeeming mission.

7. *Seventh word:*

Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit (Luke 23. 46).

(a) Here is a gentle and accurate definition of a Christian death—it is just that, a handing over of the soul to God from whom it came.

(b) Normally speaking, the soul will still need some purification when it leaves the body, before it can see God; this is effected in purgatory.

i. *therefore.* Let us remember the souls in purgatory today;

ii. *we might remember too.* If we die in mortal sin, we are not handing our souls over to God but to the devil.

Thirteenth Station: Jesus in Mary's arms

1. *The taking down from the cross:*

(a) Christian piety has always thought that the men who took Jesus down from the cross placed him in the arms of his Mother.

(b) Christian art has consecrated this tradition in the Pieta.

(c) We can imagine the scene without any difficulty. Perhaps Mary' received him in her arms with silence, instead of with tears, because she knew what he had just done; but at the same time, her mother's heart would have to feel the sorrow which was natural on such an occasion. He suffered, so did she.

(d) What is more, she would have to remain for some time separated from him that is a mystery of divine providence which we can only guess at here below but which we shall see clearly later in

heaven. Why did God allow his mother to live so long after his death. Has she not done enough—suffered enough? Or was there some task in the infant Church that only Mary could accomplish?

2. *The embalming:*

(a) We need not think that she allowed others to perform this task for her. With the poor means at her disposal she would see to it herself. Had she not brought him into the world and wrapped him in his first swaddling clothes—she would do it for him now that he was dead.

(b) However, all the time there would be a loneliness in her mother's heart which can best be felt—not described. Those who have suffered the loss of one dear to them will alone be able to feel what Mary felt at that moment. Something had been taken from her which would never be fully restored in this life.

(c) Before his death Christ had given Mary other sons to look after; we might well ask ourselves

i. what kind of sons are we?

ii. do we console her in her sorrow or do we only increase it?

iii. the best consolation we can give her is to be faithful to her son, and to remain in his grace. Otherwise we are only a cause of pain to her.

Fourteenth Station: The placing of our Lord in the tomb

The burial

Our Lord's body is now ready for burial:

1. It has been roughly embalmed and the members of that sacred body have been bound in the linen strips customary at the time. The winding sheet has covered those torn members and hidden the wounds of his body. The linen cloth has been tied around his head, hiding his face from our sight.

2. Slowly they carry him to the place where he is to be buried—and not even this tomb can he call his own, because it has been given to him by the one for whom it was prepared. They enter the outer chamber and then penetrate into the smaller inner chamber in which they lay the body, on the narrow stone ledge.

Before the tomb is closed let us kneel in humble prayer and contemplation of our Saviour.

At the tomb

I. Almost without our willing it, the words of St Paul come to our minds: Christ . . . loved me and gave himself for me (Gal. 2. 20).

(a) My gratitude should increase—as well as my shame—when I remember that all the events of this dreadful day have taken place for me and because of me.

(b) When we sum it all up, there have only been two actors in this drama from the very beginning—but especially today—Christ and mvself. Christ; the innocent victim; I the sinner.

(c) And since my conscience goes on accusing me of continued sin, we may say that I think at times that his sacrifice has been useless.

(d) My conscience is pierced by the memory of that cry of the Psalmist: What has been the use of my blood (Ps. 29. 10).

2. However, there are consoling thoughts too:

(a) Christ is dead before my eyes. But I know that the soul which is now gone from this body will soon come to seek it again, giving it a new and an immortal life.

(b) I can then remember that the same fate has been promised for me. There is a future life, apart from this one, and in that life I shall have my share. Death is not all—there is a life beyond the grave.

3. *Death is necessary:*

(a) Each day it grows nearer for me; each day we lose a little of that span of fife which God has granted to us.

(b) But what does it matter?

i. we should go forward with courage towards our death;

ii. because it is not the end of all things, after death there is another and a more perfect life waiting for us;

iii. each day a part of our earthly dwelling is destroyed, but we are also able to construct every day a part of our heavenly dwelling, an immortal one.

4. Just as Christ's spirit gave new life to his body, so it will give new life to ours.

(a) It will transform us, giving us a clarity' and a beauty all divine (Phil. 3. 21). It will then become like to his glorified body.

(b) Let hope triumph then in us, together with fortitude and generosity. Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ *(ibid.)*.

1

Easter Sunday

THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: i Cor. 5. 7-8. Gospel: Mark 16. 1-7; cf. Luke 24. 1-11; Matt. 28.1-10; John 20.1-10.

Some texts concerning the Resurrection

1. *Prophecies concerning the resurrection of Christ:*

(a) In the Old Testament:

Glad and merry I am, heart and soul of me; my body, too, shall rest in confidence that thou wilt not leave my soul in the place of death, or allow thy faithful servant to see corruption. Ps. 15. 9-10.

There he stands, fresh root from Jesse's stem, signal beckoning to the people all around; the Gentiles will come to pay their homage, where he rests in glory. Isaias 11. 10.

(b) Those of Jesus himself:

From that time onwards Jesus began to make it known to his disciples that he must go up to Jerusalem, and there, with much ill usage from the chief priests and elders and scribes, must be put to death, and rise again on the third day. Matt. 16. 21.

And as they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus warned them, Do not tell anybody of what you have seen, until the Son of Man has risen from the dead. Matt. 17. 9.

They will put him to death, and he will rise again on the third day. iMatt. 17. 22.

And these will give him up into the hands of the Gentiles, to be mocked and scourged and crucified; but on the third day he will rise again. Matt. 20. 19.

Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up again . . . but the temple he was speaking of was his own body. John 2. 19, 21.

Jonas was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea-beast, and the son of man will be three days and three nights in the heart *of the* earth. Matt. 12. 40.

2. *The fact:*

The chief message I handed on to you, as it was handed on to me, was that Christ, as the scriptures had foretold, died for our sins; that he was buried, and then, as the scriptures had foretold, rose

* The Latin of the Vulgate gives the idea of resting in the tomb; but the Hebrew does not.

again on the third day. That he was seen by Cephas, then by the eleven apostles, and afterwards by more than five hundred of the brethren at once, most of whom are alive at this day, though some have gone to their rest. Then he was seen by James, then by all the apostles; and last of all, I too saw him, like the last child that comes to birth unexpectedly, i Cor. 15. 3-8.

3. *The foundation of our faith and our salvation:*

Thou canst find salvation if thou wilt use thy lips to confess that Jesus is the Lord, and thy heart to believe that God has raised him up from the dead. Rom. to. 9.

If Christ be not risen, then our preaching is groundless, and your faith, too, is groundless. 1 Cor. 15. 14.

4. *Christy victor over deaths is immortal:*

We know that Christ, now he is risen from the dead, cannot die any more; death has no more power over him. Rom. 6. 9.

But no, Christ has risen from the dead, the first fruits of all those who have fallen asleep; a man had brought us death, and a man should bring us resurrection from the dead. 1 Cor. 15. 20-21.

5. *The resurrection of the dead:*

This at least I know, that one lives on who will vindicate me, rising up from the dust when the last day comes. Once more my skin shall clothe me, and in my flesh I shall have sight of God. Job 19. 25-26.*

Fresh life they shall have, Lord, that are thine in death; lost to us, they shall live again. Awake and utter your praises, you that dwell in the dust. The dew thou sendest, Lord, shall bring light to them; only the land of dead heroes thou wilt doom to overthrow. Isaias 26. 19.

Many shall awake that now lie sleeping in the dust of earth, some to enjoy life everlasting, some to be confronted for ever with their disgrace. Dan. 12. 2.

Ay, Miscreant, he said with his last breath, of this present life it lies in thy power to rob us; but he, who is ruler of the whole world, he, for whose laws we perish, will raise us up again, and to life everlasting. . . . Man's sentence of death, what matters it, so there be hope in God, that shall raise up the dead? For thee, resurrection to new life shall be none... . Man's birth, and the origin of all things, he devised who is the Àvhole world's maker; and shall he not give the breath of life back to you, that for his law's sake hold your lives so cheap? 2 Machab. 7. 9, 14, 23.

Then he would have contribution made; a sum of twelve thousand silver pieces he levied, and sent it to Jerusalem, to have sacrifice

* The Latin version of this text implies that it is Job who will rise; but in the Hebrew it is the Vindicator. The whole verse is obscure and difficult (Tr.).

made there for the guilty of their dead companions. Was not this well done and piously? Here was a man kept the resurrection ever in mind; he had done fondly and foolishly indeed, to pray for the dead, if these might rise no more, that once were fallen. 2 Machab. 12. 43"44·

He will send out his angels with a loud blast of the trumpet, to gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Matt. 24. 31.

So thou shalt win a blessing, for these cannot make thee any return; thy reward will come when the just rise again. Luke 14. 14.

But those who are found worthy to attain that other world, and resurrection from the dead, take neither wife nor husband. Luke 20· 35<

. . . those whose actions have been good, rising to new life, and those whose doings have been evil, rising to meet their sentence. John 5. 29.

Martha said to him, I know well enough that he will rise again at the resurrection, when the last day comes. Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and life; he who believes in me, though he is dead, will live on, and whosoever has life, and has faith in me, to all eternity cannot die. John 11. 24-26.

... sharing before God the hope they have too, that the dead will rise again, both just and unjust. Acts 24. 15.

6. *The resurrection of Christ: the argument for ours:*

. . . just as all have died with Adam, so with Christ all will be brought to life. But each must rise in his own rank; Christis the first fruits, and after him follow those who belong to him, those who have put their trust in his return. Full completion comes after that, when he places his kingship in the hands of God, his Father, having first dispossessed every other sort of rule, authority and power; his reign, as we know, must continue until he has put all his enemies under his feet, and the last of these enemies to be dispossessed is death. God has put all things in subjection under his feet; that is, all things have been made subject to him, except indeed that power which made them his subjects. And when that subjection is complete then the Son himself will become subject to the power which made all things his subjects, so that God may be all in all. 1 Cor. 15. 22-28.

.. . knowing that he who raised Jesus from the dead will raise us too, and summon us, like you, before him. 2 Cor. 4. 14.

7. *The future glory:*

But perhaps someone will ask, How can the dead rise up? What kind of body will they be wearing when they appear? Poor fool, when thou sowest seed in the ground, it must die before it can be brought to life; and what thou sowest is not the full body

that is one day to be, it is only bare grain, of wheat, it may be, or some other crop; it is for God to embody it according to his will, each grain in die body that belongs to it. 1 Cor. 15. 35-38.

Risen, then, with Christ, you must lift your thoughts above, where Christ now sits at the right hand of God. You must be heavenly-minded, not earthly-minded; you have undergone death, and your life is hidden away now with Christ in God, Christ is your life, and when he is made manifest, you, too, will be made manifest in glory with him. Col. 3. 1-4.

We believe after all, that Jesus underwent death and rose again; just so, when Jesus comes back, God will bring back those who have found rest through him. This we can tell you as a message from the Lord himself; those of us who are still alive to greet the Lord's coming will not reach the goal before those who have gone to their rest. No, the Lord himself will come down from heaven to summon us, with an archangel crying aloud and the trumpet of God sounding; and first of all the dead will rise up, those who have died in Christ. Only after that shall we, who are still left alive, be taken up into the clouds, be swept away to meet Christ in the air, and they will bear us company. And so we shall be with the Lord for ever. Tell one another this for your consolation. 1 Thess. 4. 13-17.

It is well said, We are to share his life, because we have shared his death. 2 Tim. 2. 11.

Blessed be that God, that Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy has begotten us anew, making hope live in us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 1 Peter 1.3.

SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LITURGICAL

This is the greatest feast of all, the most solemn of the Church's liturgical celebrations throughout the year, not only because it commemorates the most important of all the mysteries *of our religion,* since, according to St Paul, if Christ be not risen from the dead then our faith is in vain (1 Cor. 15. 14); but also because of its theological, moral and ascetical content.

However, we have come a long way from the simple joy and enthusiasm of the early Christians, who lived to make the churches ring with their glad *Alleluia* and thronged to assist at the administration of baptism. It is, therefore, one of the main tasks of preachers and of parish priests in particular, to train their faithful to appreciate the liturgy of Easter. It would seem that, with the new Paschal Vigil, the mind of the Church is to renew that old spirit in the celebration of this feast.

A: The Paschal Vigil

It does not form part of the feast itself, but is a preparation for it. The rite conserves in great purity the primitive lines of this liturgy as it was celebrated in the Middle Ages.

The night of Holy Saturday was the time chosen for the solemn administration of Baptism—nothing could be more in accord with the spirit of Easter. The Risen Christ communicates to us a new life. In our day, owing to the special circumstances in which we live, the customs have changed.

The Paschal Vigil consists now, as it did formerly, of these parts: (d) the lights; (/>) the blessing of the candle and the announcement of the Pasch; (r) the preface; *(d)* blessing of the font; (<?) Mass.

(a) The Eucharista Lucenaris:

This was the name given to the part of the liturgy which deals with the blessing of fire and the lights. This rite was not only observed on Holy Saturday, because all the greater vigils had it. It was especially popular in the East and in the Churches of Gaul and parts of Italy, but in Rome itself it disappeared in the third century, to appear again at the end of the eleventh. The blessing of the fire recalls the resurrection of Christ; hence the invocation, The Light of Christ, and the answer: Thanks be to God.

(b) The blessing of the candle and the Easter Announcement:

Again this blessing of the large candle used by the lector for reading purposes was not exclusive to Easter; however, this blessing on Holy Saturday gradually became more solemn in its rite than others. The candle was decorated, the idea was adopted of putting the five grains of incense in it to signify the five wounds. Finally, the blessing was made more solemn and was accompanied, on this day, by the solemn announcement of Easter. Originally this chant was improvised, the matter it contained being left to the discretion of the singer; but gradually, owing to abuses, it became impossible to allow such a thing, and it was forbidden to introduce extraneous matter into it. I he version in use today is a very fine piece of theology and of poetry, full of meaning and a deep sense of appreciation *of* the mystery of the redemption.

(c) The prophecies:

It was the custom during this vigil to read passages from the Old Testament, usually twelve in all. Nowadays these are reduced to four, and it is easy to see the connection between them and the baptismal rite which follows them. The blessing of the baptismal water follows immediately after these prophecies. The ceremony in the main dates from the third century, but the custom of dipping the candle in the water is of a later date, probably introduced about the ninth century.

(d) The Mass:

Like most of the vigil Masses this has no Introit, simply because the chant of the solemn entry into the church is not needed when that entry has already taken place. After the Mass it was the custom in some of the monasteries, to bless a lamb of Christ. Thus the faithful would break the solemn fast of Lent with this flesh which had been specially blessed.

B: Easter Sunday

Its principal feature is joy, as we would expect. The main thought in the Western Liturgy is: This is the day which the Lord has made; let us be glad and rejoice therein. The constant repetition of the *Alleluia* is simply another expression of the joy of the Spouse of Christ, singing in triumph to the Risen Lord. In many parts of the world the custom still exists on this day of celebrating the meeting between Christ and His Mother; there is a double procession, in one of which the Blessed Sacrament is carried and in the other a statue of Man', Mother of God. The Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia . . . we sing, as if to associate Mary with the triumph of her Son.

Another feature of Easter Sunday is the accent of hope it maintains. Christ has risen, and that is a pledge of our own resurrection one day with him. At this time we are invited by the Church to renew our spiritual lives; hence the portion of the Epistle to the Corinthians chosen by the Church for today's Mass.

C: Paschal Time

From ancient times the Church was accustomed to celebrate Easter with greater solemnity than other feasts in her calendar; thus Tertullian has a reference to the fifty days of the Easter celebrations. The main feature of Paschal time is a continuation of the joy of Easter for fifty days; this is seen in the colour of the vestments used (white); the organ, and the repetition in Mass and office of the *Alleluia*. During this time the Christian is expected to carry out the Pauline programme of salvation; i.e.:

(a) to walk in newness of life;

(b) to rid ourselves of the old leaven that we may become a new mixture;

(c) if we are risen with Christ we must lift up our thoughts to heaven, where Christ now is—not keep them on earth.

Those who wish to share in this joy must remember that Christ's triumph is also theirs; and from this it will follow that those who remain closer to him have a greater share in his glory. This is the idea which is developed at great length by Pope Pius XII in his Encyclical *Mediator Dei.*

II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

A: The Epistle: 7 Cor. 5. 7-8

The occasion of this epistle read today is the residue of pagan customs still in existence among the Corinthians, and also their too benign treatment of the sinner in their midst.

The Apostle uses as an example the Jewish custom of avoiding the use of leaven during the paschal days. Leaven, for the Jew, was a symbol of corruption. Perhaps this is the reason which gave rise to its prohibition in the legal supper rite (not merely the speed with which this meal had to be eaten when they left Egypt). It was also forbidden in other rites (cf. Ex. 29. 2; Lev. 2. 11; 7. 12; 8. 2; Num. 6. 15). Our Lord used the same metaphor once when he urged his followers to avoid the corrupting leaven of the Pharisees.

For St Paul, on this occasion, the leaven signifies sin; the rest of the sense being obvious. Christians should avoid this leaven of sin, since they live in a perpetual pasch, because Christ, their paschal Lamb, has been slain. Therefore they should avoid any impurity and put on the garb of innocence of life which is proper to those who have been redeemed. This is the only occasion on which St Paul joins the ideas of the death of Christ and the Pasch; however, the idea of the paschal lamb as a type of Christ has become deep-rooted in the Christian tradition.

B: The Gospel: Mark 16. 1-7

An attempt at a harmony of the different accounts

As we know, this is one of the most difficult problems in the Gospels. Here we offer a harmony based on the Gospel narrative:

1. *The Resurrection of the Lord:*

And when the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of James, and Salome had bought spices, to come and anoint Jesus (Mark 16. 1; Luke 24. 10).

Joanna is mentioned too (Luke 24. 10).

At very early dawn on the first day of the week . . . (Luke 24. 1; John 20. 1; Mark 16. 2) before it was light (John 20. 1).

They came to the tomb, which they approached when it was now light (Mark 16. 2).

On the way they began to question among themselves: Who is to roll the stone away for us from the door of the tomb? (Mark 16. 3).

Then they looked up, and saw that the stone, great as it was, had been rolled away already (Mark 16. 4; Luke 24. 2).

An angel of the Lord had rolled it back during the night, seating himself on it. His face shone like light and his garments were as

white as snow, so that the guards who saw him were struck with terror and fell down as if they had been dead (Matt. 28. 2).

2. *The women at the tomb:*

The women arrived at the tomb and went inside (Mark 16.5), and they did not find the body of the Lord (Luke 24. 3).

They were still puzzled over this when two men came and stood by them, in shining garments (Luke 24. 4); one of them was a young man (Mark 16. 5).

The women, on seeing them, were afraid and bowed their faces down to the ground (Luke 24. 5; Mark 16. 5).

The young men spoke to the women: you need not be afraid. I know well that you have come to look for Jesus of Nazareth, the man who was crucified (Matt. 28. 5; Mark 16. 6).

Why do you seek one who is alive, here among the dead? (Luke 24· 5)·

He is not here (Matt. 28. 6; Mark 16. 6; Luke 24. 6), he is risen (Matt. 28. 6; Mark 16. 6; Luke 24. 6), as he told you (Matt. 28.6).

Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, The Son of Man is to be given up into the hands of sinners, and to be crucified, and to rise again the third day (Luke 24. 6-7).

Come and see the place where the Lord was buried (Matt. 28. 6; Mark 16. 6).

You must go in haste (Matt. 28. 7) and tell the disciples (Matt. 28. 7; Mark 16. 7) and Peter (iMark 16. 7) that he has risen (Matt. 28. 7) and that he is going before you into Galilee (Mark 16. 7) there you shall see him (Matt. 28. 7) as he told you (Mark 16. 7).

Then they remembered what he had said (Luke 24. 8).

3. *The women in the cenacle:*

They returned from the tomb (Matt. 28. 8) as if in flight (Mark 16. 8), with fear but also great joy (Mark 16. 8; Matt. 28. 8).

They said nothing to anybody on the road (Mark 16. 8) but went at once to the apostles (Matt. 28. 8; Luke 24. 9). Those who took the news were Mary Magdalen, Joanna, Mary, mother of James, and those who were with them (Luke 24. 10).

They told the assembled disciples that they had not found the body and that they had received a vision of angels (Luke 24. 23) who had announced to them that Christ was alive. The disciples, on hearing this, were astonished (Luke 24. 22). To the minds of the disciples such a story' was incredible and they could not believe it (Luke 24. 11).

But Peter arose and went hurriedly to the tomb (Luke 24. 12) and with him went the other disciple whom Jesus loved (John) because both had heard from Magdalen that the stone had been removed and that the Lord was not there (John 20. 1-2).

Both hurried, but the other disciple got there before Peter, because he ran faster (John 20. 4) and bending down he looked in and saw the linen cloths lying, but he did not enter (John 20. 5). Later Peter arrived and went in to the tomb and saw the winding cloths and the head cloth lying apart from the others (John 20. 7).

Then the other disciple also entered the tomb, saw and believed (John 20. 8).

As yet they had not given heed to the scriptures which said that he would rise from the dead (John 20. 9).

Peter and John then returned to the others (John 20. 10) but Mary Magdalen remained near the tomb weeping (John 20. 11).

Peter and John told the others that they had found things as the women had said, but that there was no sign of Christ (Luke 24. 24).

4. *The disciples on the way to Emmaus:*

The complete story comes in St Luke (24. 13-35) but there is a reference to it in St Mark (Mark 16. 12-13).

5. *The first apparition:*

But he had risen again at dawn on the first day of the week, and shewed himself first of all to Mary Magdalen, the woman out of whom he had cast seven devils (Mark 16. 9).

The story of the apparition is in John 20. 11 ff.; after it she returned to give the good news to the disciples, but even then they did not believe (John 20. 16; Mark 16. 10-11).

6. *Second apparition:*

Probably before that to St Peter, but the order here is uncertain. The other women left the cenacle and while they were on their way, all at once Jesus met them and said: All hail. With that, they came near him and clung to his feet and worshipped him (Matt. 28. 9). Then Jesus said to them, Do not be afraid; go and give word to my brethren to remove into Galilee, they shall see me there (*ibid.* 10).

7. *Third apparition: to Peter:*

As soon as the disciples from Emmaus had recognized Jesus they left the table to return at once to the city where they found the eleven apostles and their companions gathered together, now saying; The Lord has indeed risen, and has appeared to Simon (Luke 24. 34). But they did not believe them either (Mark 16. 13).

8. *Fourth apparition: to the disciples on the way to Emmaus:*

The whole account is in Luke 24. 13 ff, with a reference in Mark 16. 12-13.

9. *Fifth apparition: to the Apostles together:*

It was evening of the same day—the first day of the week—for fear of the Jews the apostles had locked the door of the room where

they were assembled; and Jesus came and stood in their midstand said to them: Peace be to you (John 20. 19). The two disciples from Emmaus were still present when this happened (Luke 24. 36). They were all sitting at table (Mark 16. 14), and Jesus rebuked them for their incredulity and obstinacy of heart *{ibid}*.

They thought it was a spirit they saw (Luke 24. 37). He gave them spiritual powers and his own mission, but first of all he ate a little of what they had before them, to convince them that it was he (Luke 24. 43). They were delighted to see him (John 20. 20). He told them that they were to be witnesses of this great fact of his resurrection (Luke 24. 48).

10. *Sixth apparition: to the others and Thomas:*

The account is in St John 20. 24.

11. *Seventh apparition: in Galilee^ to the disciples on the sea shore:*

The account is in St John 21. 1 if.

12. *Eighth apparition: again in Galilee:*

This time on a mountain; recorded for us in St Matthew 28. 16-17, but his account is so summary that it is impossible to determine who are meant by the words 'though some were still doubtful'. It is possible that this apparition lasted longer than the others and that the apostles were later joined by a group of disciples. In this case it might mean that some of these had doubted up till then. It is not certain if this is the apparition mentioned by St Paul (1 Cor. 15. 6).

Some considerations concerning the more difficult points of this harmony

I. *Who went to the tomb?*

Mary Magdalen, Mary the mother of James, Salome, Joanna and the rest who had come with him from Galilee. For the harmony of the accounts of the different Evangelists it should be remembered that, in naming those who are in a group, it is not usual or even necessary7, to name everyone in the group. To see that this is reasonable we have only to look at the list of persons assisting at any public function as given in different newspapers—no two accounts will be the same as a rule. This is what happened in the Gospel story. One is sometimes mentioned alone, without including—or excluding—the others. Thus, for St Luke, Peter alone goes to the tomb with Magdalen; St John says that he went too.

2. *At what time did they go?*

The accounts seem to differ, one insisting that it was still dark and another that it was daylight when they reached the tomb. All these can be in harmony, especially if we remember that the

Evangelists arc narrating a continuous event which took some time. It could have been dark when the women first set out and dawn by the time they arrived. This would seem to be the most probable explanation of the discrepancy in the phrases used.

3. *The angels at the tomb:*

There is an apparent contradiction in the various accounts, until we realize that there was, in the case of the women, an apparition of two angels, only one of whom—he who was seated at the right side—spoke to them. This angelic vision must not be confused with that which Magdalen had when she remained alone at the tomb after Peter's visit.

4. *The scene in the cenacle:*

The message delivered by the woman to the assembly at the cenacle had three parts ; that the stone had been removed from the door of the tomb ; that someone had removed the body of their lord and they did not know where he was (John 20. 1-2; Luke 24. 23); and that they had seen an angelic vision and had been told that Jesus was alive (Luke 24. 23).

This message was given to the apostles and to those who were there with them. How many in all we do not know for certain. On the first Pentecost there were one hundred and twenty three persons present; we do know that, but the exact number on this occasion is not given. Certainly there were more than the eleven, because others are mentioned.

5. *James:*

There was another apparition to St James which is not recorded by the Evangelists, but which St Paul mentions (1 Cor. 15. 7). However, it is not possible to determine when this apparition took place.

C: The resurrection of Christ and apologetics

The resurrection is the greatest of all apologetic proofs, not merely because of what it is in itself, but also because on more than one occasion Christ himself proposes it to the Jews as the definitive proof of his divine Person and mission (cf. John 2. 19; Matt. 12. 40). However, there is a difficulty which can be noticed in many Catholic writers on this subject; they spend rather too much time in attacking the enemies of the faith and too little on the positive exposition of Catholic doctrine. Here we shall limit ourselves to this latter, referring our readers to other works on the apologetic side of the question.

* For the exposition of the theories which have been put forward to explain away the resurrection and their refutation cf. A. Lunn, *The Third Day* (Bums Oates, 1945). (Tr.)

i. FFl· *have witnesses:*

(a) St Peter announces the resurrection on the first Pentecost and proclaims himself a witness to it after the cure of the man at the gate of the temple (Acts 4. 2; 5. 30);

(b) the other Apostles all did the same *(ibid.* 4. 33);

(c) we have the thousands of Jews who were converted by this fact alone, and who could have access to the evidence on the spot;

(d) the four Evangelists who give us the facts;

(e) finally, we have an exceptional witness in St Paul. The radical change which took place in his life had only one explanation—he saw the Lord.

2. *They agree:*

We have seen that the minor discrepancies which do exist in the various accounts of the resurrection are not, in any sense, contradictions, but merely prove the individuality of the Evangelists and their freedom in writing what they chose.

3. *They are true witnesses:*

Because they had no intention of deceiving us and did not make a mistake. This argument can be explained in many ways, but for the sake of brevity we shall limit ourselves to what follows.

(a) They did not lie:

That small, fearful band of followers became a compact group, full of courage and a sense of dedication to a mission. Men who, before that, have shown every sign of being normal men of their time, now appear endowed with an extraordinary] sanctity'.

These changes need a cause to explain them and also an effect which they produced. Of the cause we shall speak later; the effect of it is to guarantee the truth of what they say. These men were holy, they preached against lies and chastised them in the case of Ananias and his wife. It is not possible that they themselves should have been guilty' of this sin in their account of something so important.

On the other hand, what advantage did they gain by preaching this fact, an object of scornful hatred on the part of the Jews and derision on the part of the Gentiles. We know how they received St Paul when he spoke about it? If it were not true, then they would indeed have been, as St Paul says, the most unfortunate of men (1 Cor. 15. 19).

(b) They were not deceived:

According to a modem interpretation, the apostles suffered from a kind of collective hallucination in this matter of the resurrection. Any competent doctor who studies the evidence would, undoubtedly, reach the opposite conclusion.

On the one hand, hallucination pre-supposes a temperament

which is of a rather special nature; and these apostles, men who were accustomed to an open-air life, simple folk, fishermen, are not the types to suffer from such a disease. Again, there has to be some kind of mental predisposition for it. In the apostles we find the opposite characteristic; they not only did not want to believe before the fact, but they also hesitated and doubted after it. Some of them even go oft' to their home in Emmaus, taking no notice of the story told by the women. And how does the hallucination theory fit in the fact of Thomas and what happened to him ?

What happened afterwards also confirms the truth of the fact, because these men went on preaching Christ, risen from the dead, even at the cost of their lives. It is a well-known saying: T would believe any witness who went to death for his testimony.' To our way of thinking there is an even stronger proof than this, namely, the endurance of a life-time of suffering for a cause. That is what the apostles endured.

D : The resurrection and theology

Here we shall leave on one side questions of lesser interest, such as the identity of his Body and so on, to concentrate on the connection between this mystery and our justification.

1. *The resurrection and justification:*

Theologians usually discuss this theme when they are commenting on those words of St Paul: It will be reckoned virtue in us, if w'e believe in God as having raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead: handed over to death for our sins, and raised to life for our justification (Rom. 4. 25).

(a) The resurrection is not a meritorious cause, because merit is something 'which pertains to life in this world, not in the next.

(b) Secondary motives to show' how the resurrection is a cause of our justification abound in Pauline theology especially; they are certain and edifying.

The resurrection was a cause of our justification because it is the motive for that faith by which we are justified. Had Christ not risen then we would have lacked this definitive criterion.

Prat's opinion is more profound theologically. Until Christ had paid the debt for our sins his redemption was bound down by the limits imposed on it. Once risen, however, Christ wras free from these limitations, and becomes in very truth a quickening spirit (1 Cor. 15. 45), of λv1ï056 fullness we all receive. He now becomes for all his disciples the source of graces and of life (cf. *Theology of St Paul,* Vol. 2, pp. 210-11).

(c) True causality:

We do not separate grace from the remission of sins, neither can we separate the death of Christ from his resurrection ; instead they

are considered as two acts in one and the same drama. Then we shall see how all our pardon and justification come from that redemptive action which began in the garden and ended at the tomb. Thus we can derive our justification at once from the resurrection and from the death of Christ, according to the effects produced in us—a typical example of what theologians call appropriation. The effect of freedom from sin is thus usuallv attributed to the death of Christ, while the new life produced in us we conceive as a result of the resurrection.

2. The resurrection as exemplar andfinal cause:

If we wish to go further we shall see clearly that the resurrection is the model—the examplar—of our new supernatural life now and in the future state of glory. Is it also an efficient cause? To this we may reply, with St Thomas, that the sacred humanity of Christ risen from the dead is the efficient instrumental cause of our justification and resurrection.

Perhaps less notice then it deserves is taken of the idea that the resurrection of Christ is the final cause; since it is the ultimate end of the whole redemptive process, and therefore the end of our justification and resurrection. It is the completion in us of that work which begins here and ends in glory.

3. *Summary:*

(a) the resurrection is not the meritorious cause of our justification;

(b) but it is the exemplar cause;

(c) from the moment our Head entered into his glory we have a juridical right to a new life, through and in him;

(d) in the order of efficient causality it is the instrumental efficient cause as St Thomas explains it;

(e) it is a final cause.

SECTION III. THE FATHERS

I. ST JEROME

The Descent into Hell

(Cf. PL. 30. 215. Because it has given rise to an element in Christian tradition we shall quote a part of this sermon which Migne attributes to St Jerome and then places among the doubtful w'orks of St Augustine.)

Light in the darkness:

Rejoice, ye heavens, with the fulness of joy! This day which dawned at a tomb shines for us brighter than the sun. Hell trembles at seeing its power broken, but even it rejoices at the sight which is

granted to it. It may well leap for joy, because, illuminated with the light which it has not known for so many centuries, it can breathe again in the profound darkness. O Wonderful light, which shone in a clear sky, clothing with its brightness those who lay among the red flames of the portals of death. . . .

When Christ went down to hell, that eternal night shone again in splendour, the shrill laments were stilled, the chains of the condemned fell broken from them. . . . Who is this terrible, resplendant light? Who is it that is at once so terrible, so powerful and so brilliant? Never was man like this seen in hell; never did the world send us one such as this. He is an attacker, not a debtor; a breaker of chains, not a sinner. He has the look of a judge, not one who is guilty; he comes to fight, not to suffer. Tell me, where are our guards and porters, when such as this One can break our gates and enter by force? Who can this be who has such power? If he were guilty he would not be so daring; were he the bearer of the darkness of sin then he would not shine with such a light amid our darkness. But if he is God, what has he to do with hell? And if he be a mere man, how has he sacked our limbo of its victims? O Cross, which has mocked at all our hopes and caused us so much harm! We achieved all our riches upon a tree and on a tree they have been lost to us!

II. ST AUGUSTINE

(The restoration of the ancient Paschal Vigil and its liturgy makes it more important to give extracts from the writings of the Fathers on that subject. Therefore, since St Augustine, in his sermons on the resurrection, generally does nothing else but prove the fact and point out that it is the basis for our hope; we shall quote other passages in which he talks to the newly-baptized.)

A: The Paschal Vigil

1. *General exhortation:*

So wonderful is this vigil in the whole world that it obliges all to watch, even those who, I do not say sleep in their hearts, but who are buried in the depths of their wickedness. . . . This happens even to the adversaries who see and envy the Lord. The world of the enemy and that of the conqueror both keep watch on this night; the latter to praise the One who heals it, the other already condemned to blaspheme its judge; the latter in fervour, the former with gnashing of teeth; the latter in charity, the former in its sin. . . .

Let us watch and pray; let our vigil be both exterior and interior. May God speak to us through the sacred writings and we to God by our prayers (PL. 38, 1087).

2. *The struggle against the darkness:*

In order to overcome that darkness by the light of the Gospel, do you who have been redeemed by his precious blood watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. Because although the prince of this world has been banished from your hearts, having within you that faith which works through charity, nevertheless, the devil will prowl around you like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Take care; do not ofter him any opportunity of entering once again; rather let him dwell within you who by his sufferings casts out Satan. When the devil had power over you then indeed you were in darkness; but now that you are light in the Lord, walk as sons of the light. . . (PL. 38, 1090).

3. *Particular exhortation to the newly-baptized:*

Light and day are words which mean the same in the scriptures. You, the newly-baptized, who were once upon a time darkness, are now light in the Lord, because he who lit the light in the darkness has illuminated you. Dress in white to show the purity of your souls; bathed in the fountain of wisdom, full of the light of justice, I may well say of you on seeing you: This is the day the Lord has made; let us be thankful for it.

Hear me, then, you new-born sons of a chaste mother, indeed a virgin mother! Imitate the sons of the light, those faithful who are good; because unfortunately there are also those who are not worthy of the name, in whom the sacraments of Christ suffer insults; who live in such a way that not only will they perish themselves, but they will lead others to damnation by their example. Do not imitate them, but the good.

Let it be no surprise to you that within the Church there should exist such as these, who approach the altar and applaud the bishops and the priests when they preach morality'; for this is the time when the grains are on the threshing floor, all of them—good and bad; but the Lord has not yet appeared with his fan in his hand. What I say to you, let those who are already old in their faith hear also; if they be good grain let them not separate themselves from the threshing floor; but if they be bad, then let them imitate those who are not, and let no one despise his brother, because every day we see how the good fall away and the evil are converted and live....

I beseech you, by the name in which you have been blessed, by the altar which you have approached, by' the sacraments which you ha\e receded, by the future judgement of the living and the dead! Do not imitate those who give you such a bad example, but see to it that his blood remains in you, the blood of him who would not come down from the cross when they invited him to do it but instead rose from the tomb.

B : Easter Day

1. *The resurrection:*

All days are the work of the Lord, but this is the day which he made especially, and in which shines forth that light of his word in the hearts of the faithful. Since we arc the sons of the light we celebrate this day of the Lord's making. Do you wish to belong to him? Then live well and you shall enjoy that light of truth which will never cease (PL. 38, 1103).

2. *In Christ:*

It is fitting that we should meditate on the passion and the resurrection of the Lord, because not without reason did that source from which all our life comes drink of that bitter chalice. Let us consider whence death came to us, and who has brought us life. You know already; death came through sin, and he who had no sin paid for it in his sufferings, those sufferings which we should have had to endure after this life. Thus he was crucified, that the old man in us might die, and he rose again to show us in his life the newness of ours.

3. *Live the life of heaven:*

Since we have risen together with Christ we should look for and savour the things which are of heaven. We were sons of men, now we are sons of God; let us not then foolishly seek lies and love vanities. We are accustomed to look for lies; do you know how? By seeking happiness where it is not to be found. There is no one who does not want to be happy; but he who seeks it in gold will never find what he is looking for.... Are you looking for happiness ? Then look to Christ, who has come to our misery, to be hungry, to be thirsty and to suffer a thousand torments; but look at him and see how on the third day he rose again, because his work was accomplished and death died.

C: Commentary on the De Profundis

(Summary)

1. *Christ, our hope:*

Out of the depths I have cried to thee. . . . From the depths of our sinful, mortal life we cry out, longing to reach that life which is in heaven above the cherubim, for which our own strength is not enough . . . What hope is it that moves us to this cry? The knowledge that he who has created us has come also to save us from our sins. . . . Why, then, do we continue: If thou, O Lord, shalt observe iniquities, Lord who shall endure it? Because it is true; but we also know that: With thee there is merciful forgiveness . . . because your very blood it was that wiped out our sins. ... If the Old Law was one of terror and burdens, now thou hast dictated

the Law of mercy and love which wipes out the past and brings us the future. He who was an adversary in the Old Law is now a friend, who places all in charity: bear ye one another's burdens, and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ. He who does not so observe it dare not present himself before the Lord.

2. *Christ raised up that flesh which he took from us:*

From the morning watch even until the night. . . . That has not yet been wrought in us which was done in our Head. ... But the Lord is saying to us: That which you have seen done in me, hope for it for yourselves, because as I have risen you too shall rise.

But someone may ask: am I going to enjoy that which the Lord enjoys? Yes; because he rose in that very flesh which he took from thee. He would not have risen had he not died; and he could not die without having taken mortal flesh. ... He who was our high priest has received from us that which he had to offer in sacrifice, our flesh; and in that flesh, having been made a victim, he made himself a holocaust and a sacrifice. He sacrificed himself in the passion, and now, on rising again, he has given new life to that in which he died. On giving himself as our first-fruit he says: I have consecrated everything that was thine, when I offered your first-fruits to God; hope then that what happened to me will happen to you also.

3. *False hopes:*

We must hope until the night of death comes. Our bodily death is but a sleep and since your hope arose that morning which saw the resurrection of the Lord, do not give up the struggle until you leave this life, for unless you persevere until the evening comes you will lose all that for which you have hoped. There are some who begin well but who do not persevere; in the beginning they suffer some tribulations, but then temptation comes, they see that the evil enjoy earthly happiness, and since that was what they, too, hoped for from the Lord, namely, to be happy on earth, once they learn that sinners attain that, then they weaken and give up their hope. Why? Because they did not hope 'from the morning watch', i.e. according to the Lord and what happen to him on this dawn.... they could not wait for their hope until the evening because they did not begin to hope from the morning.

4. *By Christ's grace:*

For with the Lord there is mercy, and with him plentiful redemption:

Magnificent! No better reason could have been given for the former verse. We shall arise as did Christ, because the immense mercy of the Lord has led him to redeem us, and if before we were loaded down with sin, now let us sing the mercies of the Lord. He

who is without sin goes before, to wipe out the sins *of* those who follow him. Do not presume in yourselves, but presume in that morning watch; see your Head risen and ascending into heaven. He redeems Israel from all its iniquities.

Have confidence in God who has forgiven you everything; do not fear, and however deep in sin you may be, say: If thou, O Lord shalt observe iniquities, Lord who shall endure it? But I know that now I can say: Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.

III. ST GREGORY THE GREAT

The Resurrection of the Lord

(PL. 76, 1169 ff, with an added section from PL. 76, 1177.)

1. *The greatest of all feasts:*

It is fitting that we should speak to you of the nobility of this feast; nobility because it is greater than all others ... In it we have the model of our resurrection, the way of hope is open to us, the way to that heavenly kingdom to which we may now aspire. . . . That which the Lord said before his passion he is accomplishing now that he has risen: IfI be lifted up I will draw all things to myself. He has drawn all things to him, for not even in hell has he left any of those who believe in him.

2. *Our mortal and immortal lives:*

Dear brethren, we have touched very lightly on the main points of today's gospel; now we wish to go a little deeper into the reason for today's solemnity. . . .

There were two lives, of which we knew one and did not know the other. One is mortal, the other immortal; one corruptible, the other incorruptible. One is to death; and the other to resurrection. But the Mediator between God and man came, and he took one and showed us the other. He suffered the one by his death, and showed us the other by his resurrection. If he had merely promised resurrection to us who live this mortal life and had not manifested it to us, who would have believed his promises ?...

Perhaps someone may say: Naturally he rose again who, being God, could not be death's captive. Well, he was not satisfied with the example of his own resurrection to instruct our ignorance and buoy up our hope. He died alone, but he did not rise alone, because it is written: And the graves were opened and many bodies arose out of them, bodies of holy men gone to their rest (Matt. 27. 52). All the arguments of human guile are defeated, therefore, so that no one may say: Man ought not to hope for himself that which God showed in his own flesh. We know that some rose again with

God, and we know that they were mere men. Therefore, if we are members of Jesus Christ, let us hold fast to the hope that the same will be done in us which was done in our Head. If we are humble we ought to hope, we who are the last of his members, that what has been done in the higher members will be done also in us.

3. *Christy the victor:*

Let us remember what the Jews said as they insulted Christ, nailed to the cross. If he is the King of Israel he has but to comedown from the cross here and now, and we will believe in him. If Christ had come down from the cross, heeding the insults of the Jews he would not have given proofs of his patience; but he waited a little, he endured the insults and the mockery, he kept patience and put off the time when they would admire him. He who did not come down from the cross rose from the tomb. It was a far greater thing to rise from the tomb than to come down from the cross; a greater thing to destroy death by rising again than to preserve one's life by coming down from the cross....

IV. ST BERNARD

Sermon for Easter Sunday

I. *The challenge of the Jews: come down from the cross:*

The lion of the tribe of Juda has prevailed. Wisdom clearly has prevailed over malice. ... Where now, O Jew, are your reproaches? Where now, O Zabulon are the captives of your hand? O Death, where now is thy victory? The slandered has been put to confusion, the robber stripped of his spoil. We have presented to us here a novel kind of power. Death, hitherto victorious, has been confounded. What will you do now, O Jews, who on the day of the crucifixion were wagging your heads before the cross, heaping insults on the Son of God, the Christ, true Head of man, calling out to him in mockery: Let Christ, the King of Israel come down from the cross? . . . Are you so unmindful of the words which you have heard from the Psalmist: The Lord hath reigned from the wood? that you refuse to believe him a king just because he remains on the wood?...

Shall not Christ finish that which he has begun? Yes, as he has begun so he will save us. But the Jews say: He saved others, himself he cannot save. Now, were he to come down from the cross he would save none at all. For if final perseverance is necessary for him who would be saved, much more necessary is it for him who would be a saviour. He saved others, therefore, but not himself; for being himself salvation, he has no need to be saved. Fie will not suffer the least part to be wanting in the saving victim of the evening sacrifice. . . .

Meanwhile he is more solicitous to commend to us by his example the virtues of patience and humility, to give us lessons in perfect obedience and charity. With these four virtues, as with so many precious stones, the four branches of his cross arc adorned; charity on the top, obedience on the right, patience on the left and humility, the root of all the virtues, beneath . . .

As for Satan's design in urging him to descend from the cross, it was not in order that the Jews might believe in him, but rather to ruin our faith in him (supposing that we should have any) by every means possible. For having read that the works of the Lord are perfect, how would we acknowledge him to be God who left incomplete the work of our salvation ?

2. *Christ's reply:*

But let us hear what answer Christ himself makes through his prophet to this invitation. Do you seek a sign, O Jew? Expect me in the day of my resurrection which is to come (Soph. 3. 8). If you have the good will to believe in me, he seems to say, then I have already offered you signs enough, signs more wonderful than that which you are now demanding. I multiplied prodigies and I wrought miraculous cures yesterday and the days previous; but today it is necessary that I be consummated. Are not the things which you have witnessed—the evil spirits going out of bodies of the possessed, and paralytics springing from their beds—are not these greater marvels than would be the withdrawal from my hands and feet of the nails which you have hammered in ? At all events, this is not the time for doing things, but for suffering. As you strove in vain to anticipate the hour of my passion, so do you fruitlessly strive now to prevent its accomplishment.

But if this evil and adulterous generation still seeks a sign, then a sign shall not be given it but that of Jonas the prophet. That is to say, not the sign of a descent from the cross, but the sign of resurrection from the tomb. And if the Jew does not seek this sign, at least let the Christian rejoice in it. For the Lion of the tribe of Juda has prevailed.

3. *The day of our resurrection:*

For it is becoming that the resurrection of the members should follow the pattern given them by their head. He redeemed man on the cross on the sixth day, the same day on which he created man at the beginning. On the following day he rested in the tomb, having completed the work which he had undertaken. But on the third day, which is the first of all days, he appeared as the first-fruits of them that sleep, the conqueror of death, the New Man. We also, during the whole of this day in which we are created and redeemed, should not cease to do penance, should not cease to carry our cross and to persevere with it as Christ did, until the spirit

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shall tell us to rest from our labours. My brethren, let us listen to no one who counsels us to come down from the cross, whether it be flesh or blood or a spirit. Let us be taken down from the cross by others rather than bv our own inconsistency.

4. *The Lamb becomes a Lion:*

The Lamb was slain but the Lion has conquered. The lion shall roar, who will not fear? (Amos 3. S). The Lion, I say, shall roar, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the mightiest of all animals, who dreads no enemy. Let them be afraid who denied him, those who cried out: we have no king but Caesar (John 19. 15). Let them be frightened who said: We will not have this man to reign over us (Luke 19. 14)! For he will return, having received the kingdom, and he will bring those evil men to an evil end. Do you want proof that he will return, having received the kingdom? Listen to his own words: All power is given to me in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28. 18). Hear also what the Father says to him in the psalm: Ask of me and I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. . . . Strong in truth is our Lion, yet not cruel. . .

5. *The resurrection—a new life:*

What shall we say of ourselves, my brethren, who deprive the holy resurrection of our Lord of the title of Pasch which is proper to it, by making this solemnity rather the occasion of a return for our soul than for an advance? The days of Lent we passed in mourning, devoting ourselves to contrition, reading, prayer, recollection and abstinence, anxious to make amends and satisfaction during that sacred period for the sins and negligences of former days. We have communicated in the sufferings of Christ, having been again planted together with him in the likeness of his death, by a second baptism, as it were, of tears, penance and confession. If then we have truly died to sin, how is it that we can ever again live in sin? If we have sincerely lamented our short-comings, how is it that we so soon fall back into them once more?...

Whosoever does not return to the consolations of the flesh after the laments of penance, but passes out of himself into an assured hope in the divine mercy', enters upon a new life of devotion and joy in the holy Spirit, and is more ravished by the thought and desire of his heavenly crown than disquieted by the memories of his past sins; such a one has indeed risen with Christ, is celebrating the Pasch and is hastening towards Galilee. (PL. 183, 273-292)

SECTION IV. THEOLOGIANS

I. ST THOMAS AQUINAS

The resurrection of Christ and our resurrection

A: The resurrection of Christ

1. *Christ rose:*

(a) To show the divine justice:

It was fitting that Christ should rise again, first of all, for the commendation of divine justice, to which it belongs to exalt them who humble themselves for God's sake . . . Consequently, because Christ humbled himself even to the death of the cross, from love and obedience to God, it was fitting that he should be raised up by God to a glorious resurrection . . .

(b) To strengthen our faith:

Secondly for our instruction in the faith, since our beliefin Christ's Godhead is confirmed by his rising again, because according to 2 Cor. 13.4, although he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God . . .

(c) To raise up our hope:

. . . since, through seeing Christ, who is our head, rise again, we hope that we, likewise, shall rise again.

(d) As an example of our moral resurrection:

Fourthly, to set in order the lives of the faithful: according to Rom. 6. 4. As Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life.

(e) To complete the work of our salvation:

. . . because, just as for this reason did he endure evil things in dying that he might deliver us from evil, so was he glorified in rising again, in order to help us on towards good things, according to Rom. 4. 25 : He was delivered up for our sins, and rose again for our justification (3P. q. 53. a. 1. c).

2. *Qualities of Christ's risen body:*

(a) **The same nature:**

In order that it might be a true resurrection, it was necessary for the same body of Christ to be once more united with the same soul. And since the truth of the body's nature is from its form, it follows that Christ's body after his resurrection was a true body, and of the same nature as it was before. But had his been an imaginary body, then his resurrection would not have been real, but apparent (3. q. 54. a. 1. c).

(b) The glory of the body:

Christ's was a glorified body after his resurrection, and this is evident for three reasons:

i. First of all, because his resurrection was the exemplar and the cause of ours, as is stated in i Cor. 15. 43. But in the resurrection the saints will have glorified bodies, as is written in the same place: It is sown in dishonour, it shall rise in glory. Hence, since the cause is mightier than the effect, and the exemplar than the exemplate, much more glorious then was the body of Christ in his resurrection (3. q. 54. a. 2. c).

ii. Secondly because he merited the glory of his resurrection by the lowliness of his passion . . .

iii. Thirdly . . . because Christ's soul was glorified from the instant of his conception by perfect fruition of the godhead; but, as was stated above, it was owing to a disposition of divine providence that the glory did not pass from his soul to his body, in order that, by the passion, he might accomplish the mystery of our redemption. Consequently, when this mystery of Christ's passion and death was finished, straightway the soul communicated its glory to the risen body in the resurrection, and so that body was made glorious *(ibid.)*.

(c) It could be handled, but was not corruptible:

We say that a body can be handled, not only because of its resistance, but also on account of its density . . . consequendy, a body that can be handled by human touch is corruptible naturally speaking. But if there be a body that resists touch and yet is not disposed according to the qualities mentioned, which are the proper objects of human touch, such as a heavenly body, it cannot be said to be handled. But Christ's body after the resurection was truly made up of elements, and had tangible qualities, such as the nature of a human body requires, and therefore it could naturally be handled; and if it had nothing beyond the nature of a human body it would likewise be corruptible. But it had something else which made it incorruptible . . . and this was the glory flowing from a beatified soul (3. q. 54. a. 2. *ad 11m*).

(d) It retained the wounds of the passion:

It was fitting for Christ's soul at his resurrection to resume the body with its scars.

In the first place for Christ's own glory. For St Bede says on Luke 24. 40 that he keeps his scars, not from inability to heal them, but to wear them as an everlasting trophy of his victory. Hence St Augustine says: Perhaps in that kingdom we shall see on the bodies of the martyrs the traces of the wounds which they bore for Christ's name; because it will not be a deformity, but a dignity in them; and

a certain kind of beauty will shine in them, in the body but not of the body.

Secondly to confirm the faith of the disciples in the Resurrection.

Thirdly that, when he pleads with his Father for us he may always show the manner of death he endured for us.

Fourthly that he may convince those redeemed in his blood how mercifully they have been helped, as he shows before them the traces of the death he suffered.

Lastly, that in the judgement day he may upbraid them with their just condemnation. Thus Augustine says: Christ knew why he kept the scars in his body. For, as he showed them to Thomas who would not believe unless he handled and saw them, so will he show his wounds to his enemies, so that he who is the truth may convict them, saying: Behold the man whom you crucified; see the wounds you inflicted; recognize the side you pierced; since it was opened by you and for you, yet you would not enter (3. q. 54. a. 4).

(e) He keeps them glorious:

The scars that remain in Christ's body belong neither to corruption nor defect, but to the greater increase of glory, inasmuch as they are the trophies of his power; and a special comeliness will appear in those places scarred by the wounds *(ibid, ad mm)*.

3. *The apparitions:*

(a) They were not in a glorious form:

Yet he did not come to the apostles in a glorified appearance; but, as it lay in his power for his body to be seen or not, so it was within his power to present to the eyes of the beholders the same body in a glorified form or not glorified, or partly glorified or partly not, or in any fashion whatever (3. q. 54. a. 1. *ad ÿum)*.

(b) How did Christ eat and drink?

Hence after the resurrection he ate, not as needing food, but in order thus to show the nature of his risen body. Nor does it follow that his was an animal body that stands in need of food (3. q. 54. a. 2. *ad yim)*.

(c) It was not fitting that he should be constantly with the apostles:

Christ's frequent appearing served to assure the disciples of the truth of the resurrection; but continual intercourse might have led them into the error of thinking that he had risen to the same life as was his before. Yet by his continual presence he promised them comfort in another life, according to St John 16. 22: I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you (3. q. 55· a· 3· *ad mm)*.

B: The resurrection of Christ and our resurrection

(Sunimary)

The true and perfect resurrection implies that we shall be free, not merely from death as a fact, but also from the necessity of dying. Death would still have dominion over us were we not freed from this necessity (3. q. 53. a. 3. c).

Since the soul is the form of the body, it follows that, after the resurrection the soul will be the same as it was before and the body too will be specifically the same (C. *Gent.* 4. 84).

However, there will be a radical difference according to the condition of the soul, i.e. glorious or not. The reason is that the body will be perfectly subject to the soul then in all things (C. *Gent.* 4.86).

The following qualities will exist in the glorified body:

1. *Brightness:*

Just as the soul will shine with the brightness of the beatific vision, so the body, joined once again to the soul, will participate in some measure in that brightness. It will enjoy a certain kind of transparency which will make 'the just shine as the sun' (Matt. 13. 43).

2. *Agility:*

The soul, enjoying the beatific vision, will find that all its wishes and desires will be fulfilled. The body, subject in everything to the soul, will obey all its indications absolutely. The present bodily weaknesses will disappear, and the body will move from place to place quickly and easily, under the command of the soul.

3. *Impassibility:*

The body, perfected by the soul in glory,will be protected from all evil, not merely present but also possible evil. This will not prevent the use of the senses to enjoy all those things which are not incompatible with the state of incorruption in which the body then is.

4. *Subtility:*

A kind of spirituality which will take possession of the body without removing its condition as a material thing. It will then be subjected entirely to the soul in all things; it is sown a material body, it shall rise a spiritual body (C. *Gent.* 4. 86).

Those who are condemned will also rise again and their bodies will be perfect, so far as their human nature is concerned. They will also be incorrupt and incapable of material suffering in the sense of disease, etc. However, as we shall see, they will be capable of other kinds of suffering.

(a) They will be carnal bodies:

Since their souls will be separated from God their bodies too will be carnal, not spiritual, and they will be, in a certain fashion insupportable so far as the soul is concerned (C. *Gent.* 4. 89).

(b) Heavy:

They will not have the quality of agility as the glorious souls have, so the body will not obey the soul in all its desires *(ibid.)*.

(c) Capable of suffering:

They will be affected by all kinds of suffering just as they are now —with one difference, they will not corrupt. The soul also will be tormented by the entire privation of the natural desire for happiness *(ibid.)*.

(d) Dark:

Their bodies will also be opaque and dark, their souls deprived of the light of divine knowledge. That is what the Apostle means when he says that we shall all riseagainbutweshallnotall be changed; for only the good will be glorified, while the bodies of the damned will be without glory in the day of the resurrection.

C: The causality of the resurrection of Christ

(Summary)

1. *The first cause— God's justice:*

The resurrection of Christ is not the principal efficient cause of ours, nor is it the meritorious cause of it; however, since God decided to make use of the humanity of Christ for our redemption it follows that his resurrection is in some way the cause of ours— it is an efficient cause as the instrument of the divine power (3. q. 56. a. i. *ad 2um* et ad *yum)*.

2. *Christ's resurrection as an exemplar cause:*

The most perfect is also the exemplar of those which are less so; therefore the resurrection of Christ is the exemplar of ours. However, although he is the instrumental cause of the resurrection of all, whether good or bad, his resurrection is properly speaking only the exemplar cause of that of the good, who are made according to his likeness as sons of God *(ibid, ad yum)*.

3. *As efficient cause of the resurrection of soul and body:*

(a) Christ's resurrection works by virtue of the Godhead; now this power extends, not only to the resurrection of the body but also to that of souls; for it comes of God that the soul lives by grace, and that the body lives by the soul. Consequently, Christ's resurrection has instrumental and effective power, not only with regard to the resurrection of bodies, but also with respect to the resurrection of souls. In like fashion it is an exemplar cause with regard to the resurrection of souls, because even in our souls wre must be conformed with the risen Christ.

(b) Considered on the part of their efficiency, which is dependent on the divine power, both Christ's death and his resurrection are the cause of the destruction of death and the renewal of life; but

considered as exemplar causes, Christ's death—by which he withdrew from mortal lite—is the cause of the destruction of our death; while his resurrection, whereby he inaugurated immortal life, is the cause of the repairing of our life. But Christ's passion is furthermore a meritorious cause, as was stated above (3, 2. 56. a. 1. *ad^um).*

IL ST ROBERT ƁELLARMINE

A: The miracle of the resurrection

St Robert divides this sermon into two sections, speaking in the first of the truth of the resurrection of Christ and in the second of how we can attain a similar resurrection.

The first section rests on two things; the apparitions, which gave rise to the apostolic testimony and also on the prophets, who had alreadv announced the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

B: Our resurrection

1. *Christ is the hope of our resurrection:*

The greatest hope of even' living thing is survival. We see this even in the animal kingdom; there is no other hope of survival for them but that of the species, and because of it they defend their young by instinct, as does even the timid hen. We feel this instinct fully, and in us it is an instinctive longing for eternal and individual life promised us by Christ (cf. 1 Peter 1. 4). This incorruptible inheritance of which St Peter speaks was the reason for the resurrection as far as we are concerned, a thing which he did not need for his own happiness but as our Head, and for our hope. What blindness is ours! While the animals defend their species beyond the limits of their powers, we are careless about our immortal happiness. What should we do? Let us see:

2. *We must be temples of God:*

The Father resurrected the body of Christ because, since it also belongs to God, he did not wish it to be corrupted. If we also belonged to God.. . . But if, on the other hand, we make our bodies stables for beasts, then God will raise them up again to be prisons for those who are condemned. Those who give themselves up to sin convert their bodies into stables. Those who use them for human ends, however good, do not succeed in making them anything better than civic dwellings. Those who dedicate them to prayer and divine praise build temples to God.

This is easy, because even eating, drinking and sleep can, since it is the will of God that we do these things, become acts of praise to him. It will be a sign of this if we use them in moderation, otherwise we are giving in to our own lust for pleasure and not serving

* Cf. The Sermon for Easter Sunday in the *Opera oratoria postuma.*

the Lord . . . God will hear the prayer of our very members, which are directed to him merely to show him our weaknesses, the principal of which is our mortality.

3. *Our first resurrection:*

The first death is that of sin; the second that of eternal damnation. He who rises again from sin will also enjoy the second glorious resurrection. One is a means to the other. Those he justified he also glorified (Rom. 8. 30).

The sign by which we may know if we have risen in this first resurrection is whether or not we enjoy heavenly things, for just as corpses do not enjoy eating, so those who arc dead to heaven do not have any taste for that which is divine.

This new life is a life of love. The grace of God is a flame, and flames always tend to rise upwards. This new life is one of love, and love always tends towards the person loved. It is impossible for the just man not to seek God.

4. *Our own crucifixion:*

So ardently did St Paul desire the glory of the resurrection that he was always seeking the road to it, and knowing that Christ found it through the cross, he says: Him I would learn to know, and the virtue of his resurrection, and what it means to share his sufferings, moulded into the pattern of his death, in the hope of achieving resurrection from the dead (Phil. 3. 10-11). . . . We crucify ourselves, making ourselves more like Christ, when wre enchain our members with the fear of God, in such a way that they cannot tend to sin. We crown our head with thorns to keep in subjection all evil thoughts; our hands and feet are nailed, so that we shall not run after disordered affections nor do works of sin. He who fears God knows how easy it is to lose graces, and he takes precautions.

SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. FRAY LUIS OF GRANADA

(There may be no new ideas in this passage, but it is included here as representing one of the most beautiful pages from Fr. Luis' works *Obra selecta,* pp. 870 ff.)

The joy of the ancient Patriarchs and of the just:

This choir of holy souls was still there (in Limbo), groaning and desiring this day; in their midst that saintly king and prophet repeated his ancient lament: My whole soul thirsts for God, the strong, the living God; shall I never again make my pilgrimage into God's presence. Morning and evening, my diet still of tears!

Daily I must listen to the taunt, Where is thy God now? (Ps 41 2S)·

O holy king; it this is the cause of thy lament, then cease weeping now, because here is your God and here is your saviour! Change' then, your song and sing that which you sang long before, when you wrote: What blessings, Lord, thou hast granted to this land of thine, restoring Jacob from captivity', pardoning thy people's guilt, . . CO d *of* vlf sins, all thy anger calmed, thy fierce displeasure forgotten (Ps. 84. 2-4)!

And you, holy Jeremias, who were stoned for the Lord, close the book of Lamentations which you wrote on seeing the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple of God, because you will see a holier temple than that after three days, and another and more beautiful Jerusalem renewed in the whole world. . . .

hen those blessed Fathers saw the light shining in their darkness, the end of their exile and the beginning of their glory, what tongue can describe what they felt ?... With what tenderness the first Father of the whole human race, prostrate before his son and Lord, would say: You have come at last, beloved Lord, so long desired; you have come to remedy my fault; you have come to fulfil your word and have not forgotten those who hoped in you. The comer stone has conquered; the labours and the sorrows of the cross have been overcome by the greatness of your love!

Words fail in the attempt to explain the joy of these Holy Fathers; but greater by far was that of Christ himself, on seeing such a multitude of souls redeemed by his passion. The labours and sorrows of the cross would appear worth it, Lord, as you see the fruit which they are beginning to bring forth.

IL J. E. NIEREMBERG

(We shall give here a summary' of the ideas developed by Fr Nieremberg in chaps. 8 and 9 of his work on sanctifying grace and its glories. The reason is this: grace is part of our first resurrection to the mind of St Paul. Cf. *Aprecio y estima de la divina gracia,* Fr J. Nieremberg.)

The excellence of the new life of grace

A share in God's goods and in his very life:

The sun has many qualities which it communicates to the plants and animals and other beings on the earth; but there are others, such as its splendour and light, which are proper to it. So with God; there are some qualities which he communicates to creatures through creation itself; but there are others which are part of his very being. The excellence of grace lies precisely in the fact that it makes us share in the dixine nature itself. There is no question

now of a share in one or other of God's attributes, but in his very being.

Since this is so we can see how little value other things have in comparison with grace. Honours are nothing compared with it, nor riches, nor poverty nor dishonour . . . nothing. By the grace of God I am what I am, says St Paul. He came to esteem as nothing all the created perfections of intellect and birth which he possessed, in comparison with grace.

The scripture comparisons tell us the same, because they refer to created, human things as straw compared with grace; as dust, even as dung! To show us how they should be esteemed they are sometimes referred to as death compared to grace, the new life.

III. FRAY LUIS OF GRANADA

(We have inserted this passage here because it completes and explains the doctrine of Fr Nieremberg. The ideas are taken mainly from *The Sinner's Guide,* Bk. 1, Part 1, Chap. 5.)

1. *The remedy for the evils of the fall—grace of God:*

Now you will ask: If this is true, how are we to overcome such difficulties? The same question was asked by the Apostle concerning the rebellion of the flesh: Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? And he answered: The grace of God, through Christ Jesus, our Lord.

2. *The reason for the Incarnation:*

For this did Jesus come into the world: to reform our nature, to heal our wounds, to be our Redeemer and Saviour. What we lost through the sin of the first Adam we can regain through the grace of the second Adam. As the first Adam by his pride and disobedience has wounded our nature, so the second Adam has given us a remedy for those wounds in his grace—the grace of his passion. This grace reforms our nature, restores the image of God to our souls, makes the soul pleasing in God's sight, and by the virtues and habits which it produces, cures our ills, heals our wounds, enlightens our intellect, inflames our will, strengthens our weakness, quietens our passions, rectifies our evil inclinations, restores our taste for spiritual things, gives us a distaste for carnal things, making sweet the yoke of God's law . . .

And if you ask me what grace is I will answer that, in the language of theology, it is a participation in the divine nature. In other words, it is a sharing in the sanctity, goodness, purity and nobility of God himself, through which man casts off the baseness and villainy that is his by reason of his inheritance from Adam, and becomes a sharer in the divine perfection of Christ . . . Grace is a spiritual adornment which makes the soul so pleasing in God's eyes that he

accepts it as his daughter and his bride. So the prophet gloried in the vesture of grace when he said: I will greatly rejoice in the Lord and my soul shall be joyful in my God, for he hath clothed me with the ornaments of salvation and with the robe of justice he hath covered me, as a bridegroom decked with a crown and as a bride adorned with her jewels. Grace is the vesture of many colours in which the daughter of the king is clothed as she sits at the right hand of her spouse, because from grace proceed the virtues which beautify the just soul. . . . What picture could be more beautiful than this? If the beauty' of the purely natural virtues is such that it captivates the heart, what must be the beauty of a soul which is filled with grace and adorned with all the riches of the supernatural virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost? There is no comparison whatever between the two kinds of beauty', because there can be no comparison between God and man, what God does and what man does by his own efforts. God showed St Catherine of Siena a soul in grace, and when she was overwhelmed by its beauty he said to her: See whether I was well employed in all that I suffered to beautify souls in this way!... This is the day on which the angels sing for the conversion of the sinner, our Mother, the Church rejoices over the talent that has been found, the good Shepherd likewise rejoices over the sheep that was lost and has been found again, while the devils weep for the prize which has been snatched from their grasp. This is the day on which the heavenly Father receives the soul as his son; the Son receives him as a brother; the Holy Ghost accepts him as a dwelling place, while the whole court of heaven welcomes him as a fellow-citizen. . . .

Great is the blessing that we hope for in glory, but in its own way, justification is no less a blessing, for it is no less remarkable to make a just man out of a sinner than to make a just man blessed. Indeed, there is a greater distance between sin and grace than there is between grace and glory. Moreover, redemption itself is also a great blessing; but what would it profit a man to be redeemed if he were not also justified? Justification is the key to all other blessings; without it not only are all others of no use to us, but they would become a basis for our condemnation.

IV. DOM COLUMBA MARMION

The Resurrection: essentially holy

Introduction:

Why is the resurrection, in preference to all other mysteries of Jesus, called 'Holy' by the Church?

Because it is in this mystery that Christ particularly fulfils the conditions of holiness, because this mystery principally places in relief the elements that formally constitute human holiness, whereof

the model and source are found in Christ; because if, by all his life, he is the Way and the Light, if he gives the example of every virtue compatible with his divinity—in his resurrection, Christ is, above all, the example of holiness. What then are the elements that constitute holiness? Holiness can be summed up for us in two elements: separation from all sin, detachment from every creature; and the belonging totally and steadfastly to God.

Now, in Christ's resurrection, these two characters are found in a degree not manifested before his coming forth from the tomb. Although the Word Incarnate had been, during his entire existence, the 'Holy One' like to none other, is it with effulgent brightness that he especially reveals himself to us under this aspect in his resurrection and it is therefore that the Church sings: *per sanctam resurrectionem tuam. . . .* The resurrection is the triumph of life over death, of the heavenly over the earthly, of die divine over the human, and it eminently realizes the ideal of all holiness.

1. *Triumph of life over death:*

See our Lord during his mortal life ... He shares our weakness, our infirmities, our sorrows; sin alone, and all that is the source or moral consequence of sin, is unknown to him (Heb. 2. 17; 4. 15).

But after the resurrection, all these infirmities have disappeared. There is in him no longer any weakness, nor any need of sleep, neither has he any infirmity whatever. Our Lord no longer experiences anything of the kind: it is a total separation from all that is weakness. . . . Herein is represented in Christ the first element of holiness: separation from all that is earthly, from all that is creature: freedom from all weakness, all infirmity, all suffering. On the day of his resurrection, Christ Jesus left in the tomb the linen cloths, which are the symbol of our weaknesses, of our imperfections: he comes forth triumphant from the sepulchre; his liberty is entire, he is animated with intense, perfect life with which all the fibres of his being vibrate. In him all that is mortal is absorbed by life.

2. *Belonging entirely to God:*

The second element of holiness which, moreover, gives its motive and value to the first, is the belonging to God, devotedness to God, which St Paul calls 'viventes Deo'. This life for God comprises an infinity of degrees. To begin with, it supposes that one is totally separated from all mortal sin; between mortal sin and the divine life there is absolute incompatibility. Next there is separation from venial sin, from all natural springs of actions, and detachment from all that is created. The more complete the separation is, the more we are spiritually free, and the more also the divine life develops and expands within us: in the measure that the soul is freed from what is earthly, she opens to what is divine, she savours heavenly things, she lives unto God. . . .

Such is the ideal of perfection: *viventes Deo in Christo Jesti.* We cannot attain it in a day; holiness, ingrafted in us at baptism, is only developed little by little, by successive stages. Let us try to act in such a wav that each Easter, each day of this blessed season which extends from the resurrection to Pentecost, may produce within us a more complete death to sin, to the creature, and a more vigorous and more abundant increase of the life of Christ. Christ must reign in our hearts and all within us must be subject to him....

And as grace is the principle of glory', those who are, by grace, already saved in hope, are already also, in principle, risen in Christ. This is our faith and our hope. . . .

May these thoughts of heaven sustain us during the days we have yet to pass here below. Yes, the time will come when there shall be no more mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow: God himself will wipe away the tears of his servants, become the co-heirs of his son; he will make them sit down at the eternal feast which he has prepared to celebrate the triumph of Jesus and of those whose Elder Brother Jesus is *{Christ in His Mysteries,* pp. 285 ft'.).

V. BOSSUET

The New Life

I. *The three grades of the new life:*

In his holy origin man received from God three gifts, namely, innocence, peace, and immortality'. Having been made in God's likeness, he ought to be, like him, just; by reigning over his passions he would live at peace, and through the fruit of the tree of life he was immortal. . . . For the total ruin of man sin destroyed justice, the rebellious passions broke the peace, and immortality gives way to death. This is the work of Satan as opposed to that of God. The son of man appeared to destroy the work of the devil (1 John 3. 8), but that which we lost with one blow will not be so restored to us; instead its recuperation will go through three stages, through which, grade by grade, we shall reach the perfection of manhood. Innocence must be recovered in this world, so that God may give us his peace in the next; while in the general resurrection immortality will once more clothe our bodies. This life is, as it were, childhood; the lives of the saints represent the flower of growth; while the maturity of that growth will come with the last resurrection, in which there will be no old age to trouble this life, because being divine it cannot decline.

But notice and this will be the main point of my sermon—that although these great changes will reach their perfection in the next

*. Takvcn f!om the sencond' T°? of the four sermons on the resurrection that feature in Bossuet s *Collected Works* (Garnier cd.).

life, all of them have their beginnings here, just as in childhood we do not possses the perfection of adult age, although the seed of it is there; all those faculties and powers which will lead to it.

There are three enemies we have to destroy; sin, concupiscence and death. Through God's gifts we destroy sin and fight against concupiscence. At the same time, by converting our bodies into God's temples, we prepare ourselves for immortality.

2. *Death to sin:*

Christ died for all, but all must die individually to their own sins. Since this is so, and in order that the doctrine of the Apostle may not be without fruit, we must remember that what is demanded of us is more than a half-hearted conversion, because sin, which always takes such deep roots, needs to be sought and extirpated deeply too. Do you think that, when the love of creatures takes a strong possession of our hearts, a superficial change will be sufficient to convert you ? Give me the knife, that I may take it to the very roots and cut in living flesh. ... I wish to die to sin, and therefore I must reach the very source of its life.

3. *The fight against concupiscence :*

The war does not end with the victory over sin. We have to fight on. Christ, who did not merely rise again, but who also destroyed death, gives us an example; we must pursue the enemy to his last stronghold, concupiscence.

There is a reign of charity in which concupiscence is extinguished, but there is another in which it is necessary to fight, and we are that battle field between charity and passion, at least until we manage to conquer the reign of sin within us.

This struggle is very good for us, being as it is a mixture of the strength of grace and the weakness of nature, because without strength we would surrender and without weakness we would be full of pride.

But it is not enough that the consideration of our weakness should make us humble; it is also necessary that wre should become ferven and zealous.

4. *The preparation for our resurrection— Temples of God:*

If I wrere to tell you that the resurrection of the Lord was the cause and model of our owm I would not be telling you anything new. But if I tell you that this resurrection begins now, in this mortal body, perhaps it will hold your attention. . . . The reason why this mortal body receives the seed of immortality is given by St Paul (1 Cor. 3. 17; 6. 19) and commented on by St Augustine *{Senn.* 163. 2; 161. 6). The first says that we are temples of the Holy Spirit and the second comments that, as in the case of any temple formerly dedicated to idols, in order to consecrate it to God

two things are necessary; the idols must be thrown down and it must be dedicated, sanctified to the worship of the true God.

Thus, to convert our bodies into temples of the true God we must first of all overthrow all the idols, that is the passions, which were the old gods who ruled there. But it is also necessary to dedicate it to a holy use, that those members which formerly served for impurity of concupiscence should now serve the grace of charity·. Thus we shall have dedicated our body to the Holy Spirit.

But how can God take possession of it? St Augustine tells us: He who possesses the principal part possesses all; now then, the main part of man is the soul and he who possesses it dominates the whole of man. God has dominion over the soul, and, by means of it, over the body too; that body which by nature belongs to the soul, by corruption of vices becomes a slave to vice and by religion the slave of God. . . . Once God has his hand on our bodies then, no matter in what part of the world corruption may have seized on our flesh, no matter where our ashes may be carried, we are under the hand of God. And you, O Mother Earth, common tomb of all mortal men, wherever the dark place may be in which you have hidden our bodies, one day you will have to give them up whole again to God.

With what respect we should treat our bodies, since they are the temples of God and since he is ready to destroy those who profane them (i Cor. 3. 17).

VI. CARDINAL GOMA

(We shall give one paragraph which shows the conclusions to be derived from the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ as applied to our resurrection to a new life. The ideas are taken from *Jesucristo Redentor,* c. 16.)

1. The crucifixion and death of Christ imply that we should leave in the tomb of our baptism the 'body' of sin: We have to be sure of this, that our former nature has been crucified with him, and the living power of our guilt annihilated, so that we are the slaves of guilt no longer (Rom. 6. 6).

2. Our death to sin is a condition and pledge of our future life with Christ: And if we have died with Christ, we have faith to believe that we shall share his life (Rom. 6. 8).

3. Just as Christ died once and rose once to reach immortality, so we should receive spiritual immortality and sin no more (Rom. 6. 9-10).

4. The apostle closes this beautiful comparison with the thought which should guide our whole life: And you, too, must think of

yourselves as dead to sin, and alive with a life that looks towards God, through Christ Jesus, our Lord *{ibid.* 11).

In this life our Pasch is transitory, because it is temporal, and time passes. Our misery buries us frequently in the tomb of sin, from which he arose one day to live the life of God; although that life does not know any falling back, unfortunately, we do. All our effort has to be directed towards taking our stand ever more effectively with Jesus, risen from the dead, so as not to separate ourselves from him any more until we celebrate that Pasch which is final and eternal.

SECTION VI. PAPAL TEXTS

He is risen: he is not here (Mark 16. 6)

1. *The call of the Church:*

How wonderful is our mother the Church; in this Paschal time she calls with her whole soul all her sons to this inexhaustible fountain of pardon and of peace. If each and every one responds spontaneously and with obedience to such a maternal exhortation they will attain abundant and flourishing life in Christ. Thus they will also enjoy that most sweet gift of peace, with which, in loving and perfect obedience to the divine Redeemer, they can achieve dominion over passions and pleasures. We can say with St Augustine: Does your soul wish to be capable of vanquishing the passions? Let it submit to its superior and it will overcome the inferior; and in you there will be true peace, a peace which is sure and well ordered. What is this order? God commands the soul, the soul commands the flesh—there could be nothing more ordered (Pius XII, 9 April 1939).

2. *A new age:* 'C' ›

Having once overcome the sting of death, our Lord Jesus Christ not merely opened to the faithful who believe in him the gates of heaven, but also a new and a happier era began for the whole human race. Truly, just as the sun, rising over the tops of the mountains, puts to flight the mist and the darkness, bring once more light, warmth and life, so Jesus Christ, on rising alive from the tomb, puts crimes to flight, washes away sins, . . . gives innocence to those who have fallen,... joy to those who are sad; removes hatreds and prepares the way for true harmony (Pius XII, 24 March 1940).

3. *Increases our faith and causes our justification:*

On rising triumphant from the tomb Christ not merely feeds and confirms our faith and that of the apostles, not merely has he invited us by his example to rise to heaven with him and by the glorious brightness of his risen body has shown us something of

the heavenly glory which awaits us, but he has also poured out upon us the fullness of the divine blessings, confiding to his Church the task of nourishing with heavenly graces and bring to a new life all those who willingly accept his commands. To this effect St Thomas observes: Consequently as to efficacy which comes of the divine power, the Passion as well as the resurrection of Christ is the cause ot justification, as to both the above; but as to exemplarity' properly speaking, Christ's passion and death are the cause of the forgiveness ot guilt, by which forgiveness we die unto sin; whereas Christ's resurrection is the cause of newness of life, which comes through grace or justice (Pius XII, 9 April 1950).

4. *Christ's eternal triumph:*

Faithful Christians; you have new reason for rejoicing on this celebration of the glorious day of the resurrection. On it Jesus returned to life. On it his divine mission, which to those fearful eyes seemed to have been obscured at the time of his passion, shone with a new light. He will remain as the conqueror of death for eternity, as the eternal possessor of life. Yesterday, today, and for all ages, as in the first Pasch, Christ is alive and invincible. But this indestructible life of Christ is communicated to his mystical Body. For which reason We say to you: Live, live, beloved sons (Pius XII, 23 April 1952).

5. *Christ, the light ofall:*

With deep sadness we direct Our thoughts to those whose minds are not illuminated by the light of divine truth and to whom, therefore, it is not granted amid their troubles and sorrows, to feel that hope which, incapable of deceiving us, is the one true consolation. We pray, therefore, that the Conqueror of death may illuminate all with his divine light and that he may transform them all in such a way by his irresistible grace, that they also may attain the paschal joys, pledge of eternal happiness. May the sacred resurrection of Christ which we celebrate with such solemnity this day, be for all men the principle of their spiritual renovation, just as it was the beginning of a new era (Pius XII, 24 March 1940).

6. *Seed ofglory:*

Today, as always, the mystery of the resurrection proclaims to you the mystery of life which triumphs over death, on condition that life has for its norm and destiny God himself. Lived against God or in ignorance of him, any life, no matter how brilliant may be its works and power, is a sterile lightning flash which no memory of posterity can ever cause to live again in its former brilliance. In the other life it is destined to rise again to condemnation (John 5. 29). But all humble lives, lived in God, have in them the seed of wonderful things; they are a perpetual harmony which death does

not tarnish, but renders more sublime; and on earth, where everything has its sunset, they are the symbol of immortal life. Meanwhile, in the hope of eternal life, works of life are demanded of you now, not those of death. Spread abroad everywhere that vital flame which you found in Christ (Pius XII, 5 April 1953).

7. *A warning:*

We could wish that the voice of these Easter bells would bring to you, besides a message of joy, this grave warning: the real danger today is the laziness of those who are good. Shake off this laziness; return to those virtues to which you are accustomed! Let the resurrection of the Lord be an example to you, he who once for all overcame death. Thus the victories already won by the Church, the faith, humanity, with your co-operation, will be converted as far as in you lies, into something stable and lasting. Do not rest on the laurels of the past; do not stop to look at the furrow once it has been opened, but bringing new life to what has already been accomplished, hasten on to new victories (Pius XII, 5 April 1953).

8. *Our true home in heaven:*

In this vale of tears we have neither an abiding city nor an eternal fatherland. We are all exiles on this earth and travellers; our fatherland is in heaven, beyond the limits of time, in eternity—in God. If earthly hopes should have disillusioned you bitterly, hope in God is neither false, nor will it fail. You must attend to one thing only: let neither circumstances nor men drag you towards a violation of your fidelity to Christ. Good and evil are common to all men during this life; but what is all important, as wre shall tell you in the words of St Augustine, is that use which we must make of both what is called prosperity and that which is know as adversity; because the good man neither allows himself to be puffed up by temporal goods nor depressed by evils; on the contrary, the evil man, by allowing himself to be corrupted by prosperity, is chastised by misery (Pius XII, *Radio Message,* Easter, 13 April 1941).

9. *The body too must be rewarded or punished:*

It is only just that the body, companion in both good and evil in this life, should also be the companion of the soul in happiness or unhappiness for eternity. Why should the soul alone be punished? Was not the body also not merely an accomplice in the sin, but at times the counsellor, instigator, by means of flattery and false promises, and by its violent suggestions? And in doing good were they not common to both soul and body those labours and merits, words and sufferings? To the body belonged cold and heat, hunger, the labour and the tiredness, the disciplines, fasts and watchings, the prostration in prayer, the night offices, the chains and the martyrdoms, the solitude and injuries. Does the soul of the just not

become more glorious through the pains of the body, happy in its sufferings, and with its tears. Does it not conquer heaven by the labours of the flesh? Let it be then the companion of the soul's happiness, let it be impassible, bright, agile, and through the submission to the beautified soul, let it partake of the power of the spirit (/W.).

SECTION VII. HISTORICAL AND LITERARY NOTES

I. *The number of the Apparitions:*

Ferdinand Prat, SJ. gives the following as the definitive list of the apparitions of our Lord as recorded for us in the Gospels:

1. Magdalen (John 20. 14-18; Mark 16. 9-11) and the holy women (Matt. 28. 1-10).
2. Peter (Luke 24. 34; 1 Cor. 15. 5).
3. The disciples of Emmaus (Luke 24. 13-35; Mark 16. 12-13).
4. Apostles or disciples in the Cenacle (John 20. 19-23; Luke 24. 36-43)-
5. The Apostles eight days afterwards (John 20. 26-29).
6. Seven disciples on the banks of the Lake (John 21. 1-23).
7. Apostles in Galilee (Matt. 28. 16-17; Mark 16. 14-15)·
8. More than five hundred brethren at once (1 Cor. 15. 6).
9. James the brother of the Lord (1 Cor. 15. 7).
10. Apostles and faithful on the day of the Ascension (Acts 1.4).

2. *The Apparition to his Mother:*

No one had more right to see her risen Son than Mary. Associated with him during the whole of the passion, she had drunk the cup of bitterness to the dregs. Was it not, therefore, only right that she should share before anyone else in the joys of his triumph? Can there be any doubt that the first visit of so filial and loving a Son would be reserved for his Mother?

(a) It should be believed without any doubt:

So credible is this opinion that it is firmly fixed in the minds of the faithful and the theologians of the Church. It is taught by all Catholic writers who have dealt with this subject, and it wOuld seem to have been the constant belief of the Church, although it is impossible to assign a moment when it began to be taught.

Even though the ancient Fathers do not mention it explicidy that is not against the teaching, nor does it indicate that they held the opposite opinion, since they limit themselves to comments and expositions on the Gospel teaching. However, tradition, through the Fathers, is not altogether silent on the point. There is, for example, a text of St Ambrose (1. 3. *de virginibus)y* in which he says:

Mary saw the resurrection of the Lord. She saw it first of them all and she believed, Magdalen saw it too, although she remained a little in doubt.

It is usual to quote Gregory Nazianzen in support of this opinion, but actually he says nothing openly; instead he seems to indicate that Mary went with the other women to the tomb. The same thing is mentioned by Gregory of Nyssa and Sedulius (cf. *Orat.* 3. *de resurr.* and *Paschalium Carminum).* This opinion carries little weight, however, and does not seem to be in harmony with the Gospel story.

(b) Common sense seems to demand this apparition:

First of all it should be believed that he appeared to his holy Mother, even though the Evangelists make no mention of this; common sense and decorum demand it. I am disgusted by the diligence of certain people who waste much time and effort in refuting this belief, which is day by day more firmly fixed in the minds and hearts of Catholics (Maldonatus, *Comm, on St Matthew).*

(c) Where did it take place?

Nothing is known of this; but it is interesting to notice that, in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, very near the chapel dedicated to the commemoration of our Lord's apparition to Mary Magdalen, there is another dedicated to his appearance to his Mother. It would seem to date from the ninth century. In this chapel there are important relics of the Passion—such as the column to which our Lord was tied at the scourging—and also an ancient painting representing this apparition to his Mother.

SECTION VIII. SERMON SCHEMES

I. LITURGICAL

A: The memory of the Resurrection

1. *Christ has risen:*

(a) This is the triumph of Christ over death; the triumph of his life, his cross and his gospel. It is the moment of exaltation of the Way, the Truth and the Life.

(b) The text of the sequence underlines this beautifully.

(c) The Church leaps for joys and scatters alleluias all over her liturgy to commemorate it, because in his resurrection she also triumphed.

2. *Not a mere memory:*

(a) Pius XII, in *Mediator Dei,* has recalled to our minds as a fact worth remembering, that the feasts of the Church bring with them special graces—a thing mentioned in all liturgies—graces which

come to us from our participation in Christ's sacrifice and according to our interior dispositions. Such graces constitute the reality or the actuality of these feasts.

(b) To understand what the resurrection means to us we must examine the texts of the liturgy. In these we shall find three main ideas which can be applied to our souls, in relation to which we receive special graces. These are hope, moral renovation and fraternal charity[2]

A triple grace through the Resurrection

I. *Resurrection: feast of hope:*

(a) The Pauline idea:

If Christ has risen we also shall rise again. This idea has its echo in the liturgy.

(b) Therefore the Church sings . . .

Christ, my hope, is risen (Sequence). She makes her own the words of St Paul: he was handed over to death for our sins, and raised to life for our justification (Rom. 4. 25).

(c) Through the resurrection of Christ we have the hope of eternal life:

O God who, death having been overcome by thy Son, hast opened to us the gates of heaven . . . (Collect).

2. *Resurrection: a feast of moral renovation:*

(a) All the liturgies insist on this point.

(b) The epistles of the Mass for the Vigil and also for that of Easter Sunday outline for us a programme of life which springs from this moral renovation:

i. Risen, then, with Christ, you must lift your thoughts above, where Christ now sits at the right hand of God. You must be heavenly-minded not earthly minded (Col. 3. 1).

ii. Rid yourselves of the leaven which remains over, so that you may be a new mixture, still uncontaminated as you are. Has not Christ been sacrificed for us, our paschal victim? Let us keep the feast, then, not with the loaves of yesterday, that was all vice and mischief, but with unleavened bread, with purity and honesty of intent (1 Cor. 5. 7).

B: Renewal of my Baptism

The anniversary of my baptism

i. Former!} baptism was administered solemnly on the night of Holy Saturday; in which case it would be difficult to forget the anniversary.

2. *Church discipline has changed:*

(a) This anniversary now passes unnoticed, so much so that few people remember to celebrate it, while some do not even remember the date.

(b) Birthdays are kept, but not that day when we were re-born to God.

3. The restoration of the Easter Vigil commemorates the day of our Baptism:

(a) The ceremonies (blessing of the water, procession to the font, renewal of baptismal vows) are all motives which invite the soul to thank God, through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Ghost, for having brought us, through his great mercy, out of darkness into the kingdom of light.

(b) It matters less now if we do not remember the date of our baptism, so long as we celebrate it on the Paschal Vigil and renew its effects in our souls.

Renewal of Baptism

1. A special beauty surrounds the first time a thing happens—first Communion, first Mass, first child in the home. God has a special predilection for the first infusion of spiritual life into the soul and on renewing it we can give him special honour.

2. We were unaware of the greatness of it when we received it, but it goes on living in our souls and its fecundity is so great that we can never exhaust it. On renewing it we draw fresh graces from it.

3. All the sacraments can be renewed by stirring up the grace of God which we have received through them, by remembering it, thanking him for it, and by using it. It is a spiritual baptism rather like a spiritual communion.

Special fruits of this renovation

I. By remembering the rites and prayers used at our baptism with lively faith and understanding of what they mean, together with the desire for a spiritual renewal of their effects, we shall receive special graces.

(a) The blessed water:

Blessed in the sight of the people to show that it is no ordinary water, it is quickened by the Holy Spirit and given the power to give birth to new creatures. The priest prays that the plentitude of the Spirit may descend on this water and make it fertile for re-generation; therefore it is called 'holy and innocent, free from all attacks of the enemy, purified from all malice, a living fountain, a regenerating water, by which full pardon is obtained through the power of the Holy Ghost for all who are washed by it

(b) The baptistery:

i. in the liturgy it is called a fountain, and by the Fathers the womb of the spouse;

ii. it is censed as if it were something holy;

iii. the Church presents it to us as a womb in which her new children are brought to life through the Holy Spirit;

iv. After the tabernacle, it is the most sacred thing in the Church; through it we are linked in a special way with the parish.

(c) Renewal of vows:

i. This is done even when the font and the water are not blessed—all renewr their vows.

ii. If we knew how to appreciate to the full the significance of this ceremony the celebration of Easter would help to keep dazzling white and pure the garment we received at baptism:

> Just as we have been buried by baptism with Christ in his death, and as Christ rose again, so it behoves us to walk in newness of life . . . therefore, dearly beloved brethren, Lent being over, let us renew the promises of holy baptism, by which, in former times, we renounced Satan and his works, together with the world, the enemy of God, and we promised to sene God faithfully in the holy Catholic Church (from the prayer for renewal of vows).

Summary:

1. The night of Holy Saturday should be one of thanksgiving to God for having admitted us to baptism.

2. As we watch and take part in the ceremonies we should desire most ardently to continue always faithful to those former promises and in our Christian vocation.

II. THE EPISTLE

A: Dead and buried with Christ

Death and resurrection

1. *The mystery ofparticipation:*

(a) Christ dies and rises to an immortal life—Alleluia. But in this Alleluia in which we sing the triumph of Christ, we also sing our own (St Augustine).

(b) Christ is born, lives and dies as head of the Mystical Body; what the Head does the body does also.

i. Christ as Head overcame the devil in the temptations, and we overcome with him.

ii. Today the Mystical Body fights against the devil here on earth, and Christ fights with it; from heaven.

(c) Therefore, as Christ our head died and rose again, so we who form part of his body, have died and risen too. But for this participation to be perfect these mysteries must be reproduced in our spiritual life.

2. *St Paul insists on this teaching:*

(a) Not only have we died in Christ in so far as his cross merited for us death to sin and resurrection to a new life;

(b) but at baptism we reproduced this death and resurrection in which we share on receiving the sacrament.

3. *Death:*

(a) As St Paul says: You know well enough that we who were taken up into Christ by baptism have been taken up, all of us, into his death (Rom 6. 3).

(b) The waters of baptism into which the neophyte was plunged, represent the cold slab of the tomb on which we leave the 'old man' of sin and condemnation.

(c) Baptism is our death to sin.

4. *The new life of Christ:*

(a) In our baptism we have been buried with him, died like him, that so, just as Christ was raised up by his father's power from the dead, we too might live and move in a new kind of existence (Rom. 6-4)·

(b) In this text we find the principal idea—we have been taken up into Christ; baptism makes us share in that sap from the true Vine and hides our life in that of Christ, which we reproduce.

(c) This brings about two inseparable and correlative effects:

i. *death to sin* (Rom. 6. 4; 8. 1);

ii. *infusion of the new life of grace.* You too must think of yourselves as dead to sin and alive with a life that looks towards God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord (Rom. 6. 11).

5. *Resurrection of the body:*

Both here and in Rom. 8. 11 : If the spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised up Jesus Christ from the dead will give life to your perishable bodies too, for the sake of his Spirit who dwells in you.

Continual dying and resurrection

1. Christ died and rose again once and for all (Rom. 6. 9-10). He gives us his grace so that we may live continually in a new life.

2. But we need also to die continually and to develop this new life.

(a) Die continually:

i. Our bodies still contain the roots of sin, and the world and the devil are still agents of temptations—all the time we must die

to these evil inclinations. To live the life of nature is to think the thoughts ot nature; to live the lite of the spirit is to think the thoughts ot the Spirit . . . natural wisdom is at enmity with God, not submitting itself to his law (Rom. 8. 5-7).

ii. .Another metaphor is that of the old leaven and the new paste (1 Cor. 5. 7).

iii. As a result of our resurrection to a new life St Paul tells us that we must: deaden those passions in you which belong to earth, fornication, and impurity, lust and evil desire, and that love of money which is an idolatry (Col. 3. 5).

iv. This death is a life-long task (cf. hymn for Vespers).

(b) Continual development of this new life:

i. Like any other life, it presumes new powers and activities; together with that practice and development which is necessary if it is not to atrophy and die.

ii. These new powers (apart from sanctifying grace) and the virtues (Rom. 8. 5-6).

iii. A Christian life is impossible without these virtues, and virtues without exercise die; therefore constant practice and growth are necessary. This is achieved mainly through a growth in faith, hope and charity.

Final perfection

1. We have to maintain our union with Christ by faith, hope and charity until that moment when our likeness to Christ is perfect.

2. At the moment our future glorious life and full participation in the life of Christ is 'hidden with Christ in God'.

(a) We know, by faith, that one day we shall be, like Him, at the right hand of God the Father;

(b) Christ is your life, and when he is made manifest, you too will be made manifest in glory with him (Col. 3. 4)· Then our life will be perfect and eternal—without the need for a continual death, because no longer shall we be earthly.

B: To die in order to live

The seed of resurrection

1. Christ has risen in glory, his body bright and immortal.

2. Christ is our head; like his, our bodies also will rise. They have within themselves the seeds of glory.

3. How can this be, when we think of the temptations and of the fact that, day by day, the body approaches nearer to death?

4. Let us see the answer to it in St Paul (Rom. 6 and 8).

God dwells in the body of the just

1. And if the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised up Jesus Christ from the dead will give life to your perishable bodies, too, for the sake of his Spirit who dwells in you (Rom. 8. 11).

2. Here is the motive for our resurrection; the same as that of Christ, the model of our resurrection.

(a) Christ's body rose because it was the temple of the divinity personally united to it; no-one, not even Satan or death, can rob God of that of which he has taken full possession.

(b) This same God has taken possession of our bodies, because he who dwells in the principal part has taken possession of the whole. God dwells in our soul, and therefore possesses our bodies as well. The whole man belongs to God.

(c) Wherever the body may be buried, it is only there for a time until God should choose to call it. No man can tear them away from the hand of my Father (John 10. 29).

(d) Therefore this weak mortal body contains within itself the power of future resurrection from the very moment of its baptism, the Holy Spirit, whom we must allow to act when the time comes.

An apparent contradiction

1. Then, why so much invective against the body, for example, Rom. 8. 13; 6. 6.

2. The phrases themselves contain the answer:

(a) the body has not yet received the total effect of the resurrection;

(b) one effect—that of sanctifying grace—is granted immediately and entirely; the others, such as immunity from concupiscence and death, will be received later, after the resurrection of the body.

3. Until that day comes the body is subject to a dual control of life and death, grace and sin.

(a) It partakes of the life of grace, because it belongs to a soul which is alive through grace;

(b) it is a body of death and sin, because its passions incline it to sin from which death springs.

We must not make the body an instrument of death

I. St Paul teaches us how we must foment and develop this seed of resurrection within the body—by choking the other seed of death and sin, that the Holy Spirit may develop without obstacle the effects of his indwelling. If you mortify the ways of nature through the power of the Spirit you will have life (Rom. 8. 13). You must not

allow sin to terrorize over your perishable bodies, to make you subject to its appetites, λ ou must not make your bodily powers over to sin, to be the instruments of harm; make yourselves over to God, as men who have been dead and come to life again; make your bodily powers over to God to be the instruments of right-doing (Rom. 6. 12-13).

2. In this quotation we find a summary' of all that is necessary:
(a) not to convert the body into an instrument of sin;
(b) not to obey the lure of concupiscence—hence the need for mortification, in all its grades;
(c) deliver it to God, so that, by serving the justice which fills the soul it may belong to the soul with an ever-increasing possession;
(d) thus, instead of sin reigning over it, the kingdom of God within it will increase and one dav God will reclaim it as his own.

III. THE GOSPEL

A: The Victory of Christ and the two tombs

Unhoped for victory

God's ways are very different from those of men, therefore it is not surprising to find that what men consider to be absurd failures are often triumphs for God. Such is the history of the triumph of Christ.

i. *The human failure of Calvary:*
(a) When we look at Calvary' with merely human eyes we can see nothing but failure:
i. *Christ the Teacher*— his doctrine has failed;
ii. *Christ the Messias*— rejected by his people;
iii. *Christ the God*—dead between two thieves.
(b) The nation abandons him, its chief men attack and surround him, the disciples have all fled, and only the soldiers guard his tomb.

2. *The divine triumph of Calvary:*
(a) Yet today, after twenty centuries, the bells ring out *Alleluia*;
(b) within a little while the chosen people will hurry' to receive baptism in their thousands or will suffer the chastisement of the destruction of Jerusalem;
(c) their leaders will pass down in history' with this stigma on their name;
(d) the disciples will conquer die world;
(e) the soldiers will enter Rome with their standard adorned with the Cross.

Complete victory

i. This is merely the external aspect of Christ's victory: let us go deeper.

(a) The devil was envious; he tempted man, the adopted son of God, and overcame him. Victory appeared to be in Satan's grasp.

(b) But victory over what? Over the love and the power of God? Impossible.

i. On the Cross Christ's hands appeared to be nailed, but in reality they are tearing up God's decree and returning us to his love and friendship.

ii. A stronger than Satan has destroyed his empire.

iii. The Father loved us before because we were adorned with his grace; still more now, when we are rescued by the blood of his Son.

(c) From that tomb will come forth the triumphant body of Christ.

i. It is the model of my future resurrection. O Death; where is thy victory? O Death, where is thy sting? (i Cor. 15. 55).

ii. From now on death will be merely a sleep. Life is not lost, it is changed (Preface of Mass for the Dead).

The two tombs and the double resurrection

1. Christ in the tomb has won a double resurrection for us—from sin and from death.

2. For both resurrections he has prepared two tombs, one symbolic and one real.

(a) To rise again the soul must experience the chill of the first tomb, that of baptism.

i. Sinful man goes down into the water, God's enemy, condemned to eternal death.

ii. The soul rises, brilliant, sure, loved by God, so that nothing can hinder its entry into heaven (Trent, *sess.* 6, *de justif.*).

(b) The body, in order to rise again, must experience the cold of the grave.

i. But on seeing it corrupt we should not fear; rather we should say, with Job: Once more my skin shall clothe me, and in my flesh I shall have sight of God (Job 19. 26-27).

ii. The same body bears within it the seed of resurrection; it is a temple of God and is possessed by him through the soul. Nothing can be snatched from his hand (John 10. 29), therefore Mother Earth, keep my body in store until God shall require it of you *(Bossuet)*.

3. Christ continues to triumph in us if we take advantage of his double resurrection and victory.

B: Christ, victorious over his enemies

A continued victory

I. Today, as on the day of his resurrection, Christ, conqueror of his enemies, has obtained a definitive victory.

2. This victory began in his divine Person and is perpetuated in his mystical Body, so much so that each day we can say that Christ rises again in his members and conquers his enemies (St Bernard).

Victory over the world

1. Jesus triumphs over his enemies who have led him to the cross.

(a) He does not do them any evil: he destroys their intrigues and overcomes their opposition.

(b) He uses their hatred to further his plans; the soldiers guarding his tomb will be the announcers of his resurrection (Matt. 28.11-15).

2. He has triumphed over the unbelief of the world.

(a) A proof of this will be the converts from paganism who will even give their lives for one who has been crucified.

(b) He has unmasked the world and snatched its lovers from it. To those who court their own ruin, the message of the cross is but folly; to us who are on the way to salvation, it is the evidence of God's power. So we read in Scripture, I will confound the wisdom of wise men, disappoint the counsels of the prudent (1 Cor. 1.18-19).

3. Christ has risen to incorporate into his Mystical Body all Christians:

(a) once they live with his life they will perpetuate his victory over the world for all time;

(b) he said to his disciples: Take courage, I have overcome the world (John 16. 33). He it is who continues to overcome the world in us.

Victory over the devil

i. On the eve of his passion Jesus announced his definitive victory over the devil;

(a) Sentence is now being passed on this world; now is the time when the prince of the world is to be cast out (John 12. 31).

(b) This definitive victory of Christ over the devil which was begun in the desert and which continued all his public life with the casting out of the devils from those possessed by them, will be completed by his death and resurrection (Col. 2. 15).

2. From now on the devil will have no real power:

(a) As St Augustine says: the devil will be like a chained dog, who can only harm those who put themselves within the reach of his jaws.

(b) The temptations with which he continues to attack men will be a great occasion of merit and of triumph over him—he will see himself defeated, not merely by our Head, but also by his body—by mere men.

Victory over sin

1. St Paul describes what has happened to our sins:
(a) And in giving life to him, he gave life to you too, when you lay dead in your sins, with nature all uncircumcised in you. He condoned all your sins, cancelled the deed which excluded us, the decree made to our prejudice, swept it out of the way, by nailing it to the cross (Col. 2. 13-14),
(b) which means that, after his death and resurrection, everything is life in Christ, by grace.

2. Through the cross of Christ the prophecy of Michaeas has been fulfilled: Was there ever such a God, so ready to forgive sins, to overlook faults, among the scattered remnant of his chosen race? He will exact vengeance no more; he loves to pardon. He will relent, and have mercy on us, quashing our guilt, burying our sins away sea-deep (Mich. 7. 18-19).

3. And now, by the power of Christ's resurrection we may hope that the victory over sin and the sting of death is within our grasp, through Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15. 56-57).

The victory over death

1. Another enemy destroyed by Christ on Calvary.
(a) The open tomb of the saviour is abundant proof of it;
(b) death appeared to triumph on Good Friday, but on the day of the Resurrection we may say: Where then, death, is thy victory; where, death, is thy sting? (1 Cor. 15. 5-56).
(c) For which reason the Paschal liturgy says to us:
i. By dying he destroyed our death, and by rising again he restored our life (Preface).
ii. Life with death, and death with life, strove, and their vast duel seemed strange and unexpected strife (Sequence of Easter Day.)

2. Not only he, but we also have triumphed over death:
(a) Although we shall still have to die, our Head has risen and in him we have risen too. His presence in heaven is a pledge of our future resurrection.
(b) Christ has risen from the dead, the first fruits of all those who have fallen asleep;
(c) a man had brought us death, and a man should bring us resurrection from the dead (1 Cor. 15. 20).

(d) Now death will be but the gateway to a new life; it has lost its characteristic as a yoke of slavery (Heb. 2. 14).

3. Only one condition is necessary that we may triumph over death with the risen Christ, namely, that the Holy Spirit of Christ, our life, should dwell in us.

(a) But if Christ lives in you, then although the body be a dead thing in virtue of our guilt, the Spirit is a living thing, by virtue of our justification.

(b) And if the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised up Jesus Christ from the dead will give life to your perishable bodies too, for the sake of his Spirit who dwells in you (Rom. 8. 10-12).

Victory over hell

I. Christ through his death has closed Abraham's bosom and has given liberty to those souls so that they could enter into their glory.

2. Hell itself sees that Christ has snatched away its prey, since the redemption is sufficient for all those who wish to take advantage of it and avoid condemnation.

C: We shall rise because Christ has risen

Our feast

i. The feast of the resurrection is our Pasch, since our resurrection is only a consequence of that of Christ. Like him, one day: In the twinkling of an eye, when the last trumpet sounds; the trumpet will sound and the dead will rise again, free from all corruption, and we shall find ourselves changed (1 Cor. 15. 52).

2. Therefore today's joy is not merely because of Christ's resurrection, but also because of our triumph over death and corruption.

Reason and Faith

I. That which reason could not prove, revelation has taught us, especially in 1 Cor. 15.

(a) The errors of the Sadducees and Athenian philosophers had spread among the Christians at Corinth;

(b) to remove them the Apostle proves the resurrection of Christ, first by the apparitions (15. 3-9), and from this he then deduces the consequence of our resurrection:

(c) If what we preach about Christ, then, is that he rose from the dead, how is it that some of you say the dead do not rise again? If the dead do not rise, then Christ has not risen either (15. 12-13).

(d) In the whole chapter and in other passages too, St Paul gives another supernatural reason for our resurrection, i.e. our incorporation in Christ, our Head, in whom we find abundantly those things

which sin snatched from us. Where sin abounded, grace did more abound (Rom. 5. 20).

Our incorporation in Christ

1. Whenever St Paul speaks of the resurrection he connects it with Christ: cf. Rom. 5. 21; 8. 11; 1 Cor. 6. 14-15; Eph. 2. 5-6; Col. 2. 12-13; i Thess. 4. 14.

2. It is a consequence of the doctrine concerning the Mystical Body.
(a) We form one body with Christ; between us there is an intimate solidarity and communion, thanks to which we share in all that he has.
(b) The resurrection is no exception to this rule; in life and death Christ is in us and we in Christ.
(c) For this reason St Paul describes Christ as the first-fruits of them that are fallen asleep (1 Cor. 15. 20).

3. Through his Incarnation the Son of God assumed, penetrated and sanctified the whole of human nature.
(a) Thus the body he assumed receives its title to immortality—and with it the bodies of his members.
(b) The admission of the flesh into the eternal life of God by and through Christ is the real reason for its triumph over death.

Distinct titles

I. Christ, in one of his discourses, gives us two reasons for our resurrection:

(a) Incorporation in him by faith:

Yes, this is the will of him who sent me, that all those who believe in the Son when they see him should enjoy eternal life, I am to raise them up at the last day (John 6. 40).

(b) The Holy Eucharist:

The man who eats my flesh and drinks my blood enjoys eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day (John 6. 55).

2. St Paul gives us yet another—our participation in the same spirit which raised Jesus from the dead.
(a) It is a great consolation to think that the resurrection of our bodies is but the final stage in a life-long work of the Holy Ghost within us (Rom. 8. 11).
(b) The same argument is developed in 2 Cor. 3 and 4.
i. By the spirit we are transformed into the image of Christ (3. 18).
ii. Therefore the life of Christ must be manifested in us, now, by carrying his cross and delivering ourselves to death for him (4. 10-11),
iii. and, one day, by rising together with him (4. 14).

(c) The pledge of this final resurrection is the Holy Spirit. As St John Chrysostom says: a pledge is part of a whole; and you who have received as a pledge nothing less than the Holy Spirit, can have no shadow oi doubt that one day you wdl receive what remains (PG. 5, 431).

Do Good

1. There can be no more practical conclusion than that of the Apostle: Therefore, beloved brethren, be ye steadfast and immovable; always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not vain in the Lord (1 Cor. 15. 58).

2. Had Christ not risen we would have been of all men the most miserable (1 Cor. 15. 19). But since Christ has risen, the most miserable of men are:

(a) those who think more of temporal things than of spiritual;
(b) those whose only aim is to seek pleasure;
(c) those who are more interested in the life of the senses;
(d) those who follow the stream of materialism.

3. The resurrection reminds us to seek the things that are above, despising, and if necessary' rejecting, those that are here below.

D: The Resurrection: foundation of the theological virtues

Special importance of the fact of the Resurrection

1. It is more than a mere incident in Christ's life:

(a) Any single one of the miracles of our Saviour could be omitted, because without it the divine mission would be no less divine or efficacious.

(b) But when it comes to the resurrection it cannot be left out either in writing or preaching.

2. The reason is the peculiar importance of the resurrection in the total scheme of Christ's revelation.

(a) It is the main element in the life, mission and work of Christ and his church.

(b) It is the corner stone of the theological virtues.

Faith

1. *The testimony of Christ himself* (John 2. 18-22).

2. *That of the Apostles.*

On the day of Pentecost they preached it at once, and it is this truth which moved their audiences to conversion (Acts 2. 22 if.).

3. *The testimony of St Paid:*

(a) If Christ is not risen then our preaching is groundless, and your faith, too, is groundless (1 Cor. 15. 14).

(b) If the hope we have learned to repose in Christ belongs to this world only, then we are unhappy beyond all other men *(ibid.* 19).

(c) When I fought against beasts at Ephesus with all my strength, of what use was it if the dead do not rise again? Let us eat and drink, since we must die tomorrow *(ibid.* 32).

(d) But we can say in triumph, But no, Christ has risen from the dead, the first-fruits of all those who have fallen asleep *(ibid.* 20).

(e) Thus the whole idea of life changes; all the truths of our faith are certain:

i. Christ is God;

ii. he has raised us up from the dead;

iii. he has redeemed us and obtained grace for us;

iv. we are on the road to heaven in the Church. His word must not pass away (Luke 21. 33).

Hope

1. The joy of the resurrection gives new life to our hope—of all the virtues the most characteristic of our exile here. St Paul says to the Romans, I would see you . . . buoyed up by hope.

2. The Church has stressed this in her liturgy for Easter Sunday: Christ, my hope, has risen (Sequence).

3. In the risen Christ we hope:

(a) to escape from the trials of this life: knowing that he who raised Jesus from the dead will raise us, too, and summon us, like you, before him. . . . No, we do not play the coward, though the outward part of our nature is being worn down, our inner life is refreshed from day to day. This light and momentary affliction brings with it a reward multiplied every way, loading us with everlasting glory, if only we will fix our eyes on what is unseen, not on what we can see. What we can see lasts but for a moment; what is unseen is eternal (2 Cor. 4. 14-18);

(b) to triumph over our enemies;

(c) to triumph in heaven (cf. Luke 24. 26);

(d) for the fulfilment of his promises (cf. John 3. 6; 1 John 3. 2; Phil. 3. 20 f.).

Charity

i. *St Paul tells us:*

(a) Christ was handed over to death for our sins, and raised to life for our justification (Rom. 4. 25).

(b) This is the summary of the dogma of our redemption, which is not a problem of death but of life.

i. *death is the road to life;*

ii. *that is why the resurrection sanctifies us:* because Christ brings to his members through it a new life which consists in love and charity.

(c) Therefore St Paul uses this fact to insist on the new life which the Christian should lead (cf. Rom. 4. 6-9; Col. 3. 1-4).

2. The Liturgy exhorts us to live a new, honest life, in sincere love for God and charity towards our neighbour.

Rid yourselves of the leaven which remains over, so that you may be a new mixture, still uncontaminated as you are. Has not Christ been sacrificed for us, our paschal victim? Let us keep the feast then, not with the leaven of yesterday, that was all vice and mischief, but with the unleavened bread, with purity and honesty of intent (1 Cor. 5. 7-9).

3. Thus does Christ become the magnet which draws all men to himself (John 12. 32).

E: Baptism — the mystery of resurrection

Baptism and the Paschal liturgy

1. The Church represents for us, as the glorious prize of the risen Christ, the newly-baptized who received the sacrament of re-birth at Easter time.

2. The prayers of the paschal liturgy- make frequent reference to them.

3. Baptism is truly the sacrament of resurrection.

Baptism is an incorporation in Christ

Just as by carnal birth we are incorporated in Adam and receive the contagion of his sin, so baptism is:

1. *A true re-birth:*

Believe me, no man can enter into the kingdom of God unless birth comes to him from water and from the Holy Spirit (John 3.5).

2. *We put on Christ:*

Being incorporated in him: We, too, all of us, have been baptized into a single body by the power of a single Spirit, Jews and Greeks, slaves and free men alike; we have all been given drink at a single source, the one Spirit (1 Cor. 12. 13; Gal. 3. 27).

Baptism, death and victory

i. Baptism, the mystery of death and resurrection in Christ.

(a) The sacrament effects this incorporation in Christ precisely by reproducing in the person baptized the death and resurrection of Christ,

(b) as if the soul, on descending into the waters, were buried.

(c) By baptism we die with Christ.

i. *The old man is destroyed, that body of sin :* and there beneath those waters, made fertile by the Moly Spirit, the soul is grafted on Christ, coming forth with a new life which is not its own but his.

ii. *It is a spiritual life which will last for eternity.*

2. Baptism is a victory over our enemies. All those enemies who were overcome by Christ at his resurrection are also defeated by the grace which is received at Baptism.

(a) The devil:

i. loses his power once the grace of Baptism wipes away sin;

ii. this is the reason for the exorcisms with which the Church commands the devil to leave the soul of the neophyte.

(b) The world:

i. the newly baptized renounces solemnly the vanities and pomps of the world;

ii. it is possible for him to keep this promise, because being incorporated in Christ, it is Christ who fights and overcomes in the person of the newly baptized;

iii. he who could say with all truth, 'Have confidence; I have overcome the world', has passed on this victory to his faithful followers.

(c) The flesh:

Because although concupiscence remains in us, it is now an occasion of fighting and of overcoming with merit; we also have the firm hope that his grace will be sufficient for us (2 Cor. 12. 9).

(d) Death:

He who believes and is baptized will reach eternal life (Mark 16. 16), especially when this faith is a living faith, accompanied by good works.

(e) The sufferings of this life:

i. these also remain, but in the hands of the true Christian they are the weapons of victory.

ii. After his resurrection Christ did not fail to remind us that it is necessary to enter into life eternal through the medium of these sufferings and the cross (Luke 24. 26).

Baptism demands the life of the new-born

1. A life which is worthy of the new vital principle which animates the baptized.

2. He should now live as a citizen of the heavenly kingdom.

3. It is a thing unworthy of the baptism we have received to produce fruits which Christ cannot recognize as his own (Col. 3.1-4).

F: The women at the tomb

The Gospel texts

1. And when the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of James, and Salome had bought spices, to come and anoint Jesus (Mark 16. 1).

2. So they came to the tomb very early in the day after the sabbath, at sunrise *(ibid.* 2).

An imprudent act

The act of the holy women appears to be imprudent.

I. *In itself:*

(a) They are going to embalm a body which had already been embalmed;

(b) The body was inside a tomb which they could not open;

i. they had no means of removing the stone; therefore they ask one another who shall remove it for them;

ii. it would not be possible to find anyone to help them at such an hour;

iii. who would lend their help in such a case, knowing the dangers?

(c) there were guards at the tomb; who would not have permitted anyone to open it or to remove the body;

(d) they were about to do something which was forbidden by the civil and by the natural law:

i. it was forbidden by Roman law without special permission, which these women did not have;

ii. it is forbidden by the natural law.

(e) they had not counted on the authority' of Peter or the other aposdes but were acting on their own initiative;

(f) their action could have compromised them all before Caesar and Pilate;

(g) even if they had not managed to take the body from the tomb because of the guards, the very fact of attempting such a thing would have given confirmation to the statement of the Scribes and Pharisees that his disciples intended to rob the tomb and pretend that he was risen from the dead.

2. *Grave spiritual imperfection:*

Their act also convicts them of this:

(a) they had no faith in the resurrection of the Lord:

(b) for that reason Mary, the Mother of Jesus did not accompany them:

How could she associate herself with these women who were on their way to embalm a body which would rise again, joined to the soul of Christ, who would so soon come to seek it out and lift it from the grave ?

Opposing judgements

1. *The judgement of men:*

(a) The apostles and disciples judged this action slightingly:

i. *they considered them to be mad* (Luke 24. 11); they thought their stories of visions were imagination and hysteria;

ii. *they did not believe them at first:* they complained that they were frightening them (Luke 24. 22).

(b) Only Peter and John appear to have been impressed by what they said, and went to see for themselves.

(c) So far the judgement of men.

2. *That of Christ:*

(a) What has already been said about the imperfection of their motives, etc. is true;

(b) however, we must also admit that this action has another aspect which must have been pleasing to our Lord;

(c) at least his conduct towards them seems to indicate this:

i. he is not in the tomb but he sends two messengers to receive the women;

ii. from the mouth of the angel they receive the order that they are not to be afraid (Mark 16. 6);

iii. he announces to them that Christ has risen and makes them messengers to tell the good news to the other apostles and disciples.

The lesson

1. This episode gives us the key to the interpretation of the phrase of St Augustine: Love and then do what you will.

The conduct of the women is inspired by love; that fact alone saves them.

(a) It is an imperfect love if you like, but it is love which is pure and disinterested; love for Christ.

(b) There is no love of self in their action.

(c) In such cases the love of God can and does purify the human love of all its imperfections.

2. *False prudence and true love:*

We need only contrast the conduct of prudent, cautious and sensible men with that of the women, who appear mad. The former is condemned by the Gospel; the latter praised.

j. *A practical application:*

This tender incident has many applications.

(a) Action like this, under the impulses of love, can occur in the young and in the case of women.

(b) It does not always happen, but it is certainly more frequent in their case than in that of men.

(c) Alen are not always just in their appreciation of women and young people who are moved by the motives of love.

i. At times the mature man is all too ready to observe and criticize the defects which exist, or are thought to exist, in the young or in women; but he lacks that sensibility *of* heart to understand their motives. This can happen often in the home, where the husband, forgetting that he is surrounded by acts of love and kindness, sees only the defects.

ii. Many times we squash the impulses of youth thoughtlessly, forgetting that their intention is pure and their motives lofty', coming as they do from a generous heart.

G: The Mystical Body

Christ, the Head *of* his Church

1. It is said that Christ is head *of* his Church because of the similarity between his position and that *of the* head of the human body.

2. The head of the body is superior to the other parts of it because:

(a) it has greater dignity'; it is in the highest part of the body;

(b) from it proceed those impulses which rule and guide the rest of the body;

(c) because it directs the other members in their acts.

3. *Christ, as God, is our head:*

Because the fullness of the godhead is in him and from him comes all grace (John 15. 5).

Christ our head in his human nature

1. *Because of his dignity:*

(a) This human nature was raised to intimate union with the divinity.

(b) It redeems and sanctifies the Church. In him is all grace and we live through and by his fullness.

2. *Because he is the source:*

From which we have received our faith and the spirit of charity.

3. *Because of the direction we receive from him:*

(a) through his teaching;

(b) through his example.

4. *Because of his nature:*
As man it is like ours.

5. *Therefore St. Thomas says:*
(a) Commonly speaking it may be said that Christ is our head as God, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost;
(b) but properly speaking he alone is our head by reason of his human nature.

How Christ is head of mankind

1. In the human body there is a fourfold unity between the members:
(a) a union of nature;
(b) a mutual union of bones, nerves and sinews, by means of which they form one whole;
(c) by the vital spirit of life which runs through the whole body;
(d) because all the members are made perfect by the soul which is one and the same in all.

2. These four conditions are to be found in the mystical body:
(a) all the members are of one and the same nature;
(b) a common faith unites them;
(c) they are given life through grace and charity;
(d) the Holy Spirit is in all; he is the final perfection, the soul which unites this vast body.

Different kinds of members (St Thomas 3. P. q. 8)

1. In a special way Christ is head of those who are united with him in glory.

2. Also of those who are united with him by charity.

3. He is also head of those who are united with him by faith, but not by charity, i.e. those who are in mortal sin, but who continue to believe in his teaching.

4. He is potentially united with those who as yet are not united to him by faith, but who one day will be, through divine providence. Then they will be actually united to him.

5. In the last category we find those who are not actually united with him and who never will be. They are only potentially his members. These are they who have not got the faith and will never receive it. They are potentially his members because Christ came to die for all and to offer the means of salvation for all; but in their case these means are never actually applied to their souls.

External government and interior influence

1. This is a most important point in St Thomas's doctrine.

2. It serves to explain the difference between the devil's influence as prince of this world, and that of Christ, the Head of the Church.

(a) The devil can only act on our senses, both interior and exterior; but never on the spiritual faculties.

(b) Christ, however, exercises on his members a double influence:

i. *interior on our souls:* through the gifts of the Holy Ghost and by his grace;

ii. *an exterior influence:* through his representatives in the Church, especially the bishops and priests—and above all, the Pope. These representatives receive their power to govern precisely because they stand in the place of Christ; Christ is therefore head of his Church by his power and also by his authority (cf. Pius XII, Encycl. *The Mystical Body of Christ).*

Low Sunday

MY LORD AND MY GOD

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: i John 5. 4-10. Gospel: John 20. 19-31.
Cf. Mark, 16. 14; Luke 24. 36-45

Texts which refer to peace

1. *The peace announced by the prophets:*

For our sakes a child is born, to our race a son is given, whose shoulder will bear the sceptre of princely power. What name shall be given him? Peerless among counsellors, the mighty God, Father of the world to come, the Prince of peace. Ever wider shall his dominion spread, endlessly at peace; he will sit on David's kingly throne, to give it lasting foundations of justice and right; so tenderly he loves us, the Lord of hosts. Isaias 9. 6-7.

Wolf shall live at peace with lamb, leopard take its ease with kid; calf and lion and sheep in one dwelling-place, with a little child to herd them! Cattle and bears all at pasture, their young ones lying down together, lion eating straw like ox; child new-weaned, fresh from its mother's arms, playing by asp's hole, putting hand in viper's den! All over this mountain, my sanctuary, no hurt shall be done, no life taken. Deep as the waters that hide the sea-floor, knowledge of the Lord over-spreading the world! Isaias 11. 6-9.

Thus says the Lord, Peace shall flow through her like a river, the wealth of the nations shall pour into her like a torrent in flood; this shall be the milk you drain, like children carried at the breast, fondled on a mother's lap. Isaias 66. 12. Cf. Lev. 26. 6; Isaias 2. 4.

Such a covenant I will make as shall grant them security; beasts of prey there shall be none, safe resting, now, in the desert, safe sleeping in the woods; on my hill-sides they shall dwell, a blessed people in a blessed home, rain in its season fall on them, and blessings all the while. Ezech. 34. 25-26.

My covenant shall pledge them prosperity, a covenant that shall never be revoked; I will make them ... and give them increase, and set up my sanctuary in their midst forever. Ezech. 37. 26. Cf. Mich. 4. 3; Ag. 2. 8, 10; Zach. 9. 10.

2. *The peace of Christ:*

Glory to God in high heaven, and peace on earth to men that are God's friends. Luke 2. 14.

My daughter, thy faith has brought thee recovery'; go in peace, and be rid of thy affliction. Mark 5. 34.

But he told the woman, Thy faith has saved thee; go in peace. Luke 7. 50.

While they were speaking of this, he himself stood in the midst of them, and said, Peace be upon you; it is myself, do not be afraid. Luke 24. 36.

Peace is my bequest to you, and the peace which I give you is mine to give; I do not give peace as the world gives it. Do not let your heart be distressed or play the coward. John 14. 27.

God has sent his word to the sons of Israel, giving them news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. Acts 10. 36.

Once justified, then, on the ground of our faith, let us enjoy peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. 5. 1.

Keep peace with all men, where it is possible, for your part. Rom. 12. 18.

Let our aim, then, be peace, and strengthening one another's faith. Rom. 14. 19.

God is the author of peace, not of disorder. 1 Cor. 14. 33.

He is our bond of peace; he has made the two nations one, breaking down the wall that was a barrier between us, the enmity there was between us, in his own mortal nature. Eph. 2. 14-15.

... eager to preserve that unity the Spirit gives you, whose bond is peace. Eph. 4. 3.

So may the peace of God, which surpasses all our thinking, watch over your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Phil. 4. 7.

Neglect the call of evil, and rather do good; let peace be thy quest and aim. 1 Peter 3. 11.

SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LITURGICAL

This Sunday has various names; it is called *Quasimodo,* Low Sunday or *Dominica in Albis.* The origin of the name *Quasimodo* is obviously the opening words of the Introit, while the name *Dominica in Albis* comes from the fact that, on this day, the neophytes laid aside the white garments which they had received at baptism and assumed their ordinary dress. Their spiritual infancy was over and they came of age. On this day also the stational cycle which began on Septuagesima comes to an end.

Today's Mass cannot be properly understood unless these facts are kept in mind. The Introit is taken from the Epistle of St Peter, in which he says: You are children, new-born, and all your craving must be for the soul's pure milk, that will nurture you into salvation, once you have tasted, as you have surely tasted, the goodness of the

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Lord (i Pet. 2. 2-3). It is a reminder of thc salutary counsels which St Peter has already given to the new Christian.

The Collect is a prayer in which we ask almighty God that 'we who have celebrated thc Easter rites may, through thy bounty, ever cleave to them in our life and conversation.' That is to say, that we may be dead to the old life of concupiscence and sin, while living to God.

The Epistle breathes a holy optimism. Through baptism we have received the gift of that faith which will enable us to triumph over the world and its dangers.

These words are not addressed merely to the newly-baptized; they have an application to all the faithful, especially since, on the night of the Easter Vigil, we have all reminded ourselves of our baptism.

Schuster says that: 'according to an ancient Roman custom, dating at least from thc time of Gregory the Great, the basilicas of the martyrs outside the walls were never chosen as the object of the stational processions on account of their distance from the city.' Today, however, an exception is made in honour of the young martyr St Pancratius, who suffered martyrdom at the early age of fourteen. Solemn oaths used to be taken at his tomb, and by using this as the stational church the Liturgy proposes as our model this martyr. As he was ready to seal his faith with his blood, so we must be ready to defend ours with the same tenacity.

The Church's mind is still full of the Resurrection, which explains the many references to it in this Mass.

II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

A: The Epistle: 1 John 5. 4-10

1. *The occasion:*

These neophytes, since they possess the Spirit which enables them to confess Christ, are distinguished from the heretics whom they will defeat. These are they who keep the faith by practising it in the keeping of the commandments. This is the victory over this world.

2. *The text:*

(a) Whatever takes its origin from God must needs triumph over the world ... He alone triumphs over the world, who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

We can almost see St John, now an old man, sitting there in a quiet corner of Asia, and affirming that the faith had already triumphed over the world. It is the youthful optimism of the Apostle of Love: Our Faith, that is the triumphant principle which triumphs over the world (v. 4).

But this is more than a victory over the mind, it is also the triumph of grace, which to St John means life together with the true Vincas branches grafted on it. For this reason he pictures the Christian as one who, born again to God, has begun by uprooting from his heart the life of this world, which is opposed to that of Christ. Cf. 4. vv. 5-6.

(b) The three witnesses:

Thus we have a three-fold warrant in heaven ... (v. 7).

The three testimonies for the divinity of Christ: his baptism in the Jordan, when the voice of his Father was heard in his favour, the cross and our faith.

Jesus came by water and blood—that is, not merely through his baptism but also from the very moment of his conception he was the Son of God. St John is concerned with refuting the gnostic heretics. This divinity never left him, even at the moment of his death on the cross. To both testimonies he adds that of the Holy Spirit. If we keep in mind the use of the word *spirit* in St John we can conclude that the word as used here will have the same meaning as in John 3. 5 and 6. 63, i.e. the Spirit of Truth has testified in his turn to the divinity of Christ, and he is infallible. In the Old Testament three witnesses who agreed were necessary' to prove a thing to be true; St John brings these three witnesses fonvard here to show that Christ is God. If we accept the testimony of men, he says, why should we not accept that of God, yvhich is of a higher order? That testimony has been given through the Holy Spirit in the baptism and the death *of* Jesus.

There is yet another interpretation of this difficult passage (cf. Nacar-Colunga Bible, *in loco*)\ the water signifies the baptism by yvhich yve are baptized, the blood is that of Christ poured out for us, the Spirit is the Holy Ghost who gives us our faith. All three combine in the grace of God.

3. *Applications:*

(a) The victory of the faith:

By faith man is released from the slavery of the yvorld, from sin, bitterness and the scepticism of a life without hope. He is brought into the way that leads to life. Grace frees us from the inner slavery of Satan and brings us into the kingdom of God. Faith leads us to the sacraments, and the Christian, with his new-found strength, can look the world in the face and be sure of his victory over it provided he realizes that Christ, the Son of God, is his guide and model.

B: The Gospel: John 20. 19-31

This Gospel tells us of two apparitions of Christ to the disciples after his resurrection, the first on the evening of Easter Day and the second eight days later, when Thomas was present with the others.

The first appearance

This is described briefly by St Mark while St Luke adds certain most interesting points. The most complete account, however, is that of St John, who divides it into two scenes, the first containing the apparition and the second the gift of power over sin.

i. *The apparition:*

The evening of the first day of the week (John 20. 19).

(a) The evening of Sunday:

The order of the appearances of our Lord is due to his own divine providence—the apostolic College was left till last!

(b) He showed himself to the eleven and to their companions (cf. Mark 16. 14; Luke 24. 33):

The term 'the eleven', as the twelve in St John (20. 24) means the Apostles in general, even though all may not have been present, as on this occasion when Thomas and Judas were both absent. Never seek Christ anywhere else but in the midst of his Apostles, says St Bernard (Serm. 5 on the Ascension).

(c) As they sat at table . . .

The detail is St Mark's.

(d) While they were speaking . . . (Luke 24. 36):

They w'ere talking about the appearance to the disciples on the way to Emmaus.

(e) The doors were locked for fear of the Jews (John 20. 19):

Their fears seem to have increased. Formerly they w'ere prepared to visit the tomb, but now they have locked themselves in. The reason is that there were now new motives for fear; the empty tomb might cause an investigation and twenty or more people gathered together would give the impression of a conspiracy.

(f) Jesus came . . .

with no other sign except that of his presence.

(g) Peace be upon you . . .

A significant greeting in the circumstances, and one which was common among the Jews.

Twice our Lord salutes his disciples in this fashion, on the first occasion to prepare them to hear the true sense of Scripture and to believe in his resurrection—impossible to a heart which is not at peace. On the second occasion to dispose them for the mission of converting the world. Apostolic labour needs peace of soul; because, before we can bring peace to others we must ourselves possess it.

(h) He showed them his hands and his side . . .

From this point the description of St Luke is more vivid. There is a struggle between the love of Christ for these disciples on the one hand and their fear and stupidity on the other. The first impression is one of terror—they imagine they are seeing a ghost. To this Christ's reply is to make them feel his flesh. They appear so stupified that he is forced to do something simple to convince them. Consequently, he sits down to eat with them.

(i) Touch me and look . . .

From the earliest times these words have been used to prove the truth of the resurrection and that of Christ's body. How near God has come to men! In the Old Testament death came on one who dared to touch the ark.... St John, as an old man would write: Our message concerns that Word who is life; what he was from the first, what we have heard about him, what our own eyes have seen of him, what it was that met our gaze, and the touch of our hands (i John 1.1). Was he not thinking, as he wrote, of this scene?

(j) And while they were still doubtful and bewildered with joy .. . (Luke 24. 41):

They did believe, and for this reason they were full of joy; then the joy itself brought doubt. . . . Could such joy really be true? It is like a dream to them. They are common phrases which do describe the inner experience (cf. Gen. 45. 26).

(k) Have you anything here to eat? ...

It is the final attempt to calm them by a simple action which will convince, without further words.

(l) The Lord's wounds:

St John merely says that he showed them his hands and side; but it is an important detail for the passion of Christ, because it is the only time we are told that they nailed his hands and feet. Why did our Lord still preserve them after his resurrection? These reasons are given:

i. As a memory' of his fight to save us, of that great price which he had to pay. Perhaps the martyrs too keep theirs (St Augustine, *De Civ. Dei.* 1. 22, *c.* 20).

ii. To heal the hearts which doubt him, i.e. as a proof of his resurrection.

iii. To present them constantly to the Father in intercession for us.

iv. To increase our love.

v. To offer us a refuge in time of temptation, in sin a memory of his mercy.

vi. That the Judge may show them once again to the Jews who refused to accept him and to the Christians who have despised them.

2. *The mission of pardon:*

(a) Once they are calm Christ opens to them the full sense of the Scriptures concerning him, reminding them of what he had said while he was with them and how they must bear witness to what they have heard and seen to all nations. Then he stands up:

I came upon an errand from my Father, and now I am sending you out in my turn (John 20. 21).

There is a similarity between the two missions, it is the same errand, to save the world; it is universal; it is the same love which prompts both; there will be the same dangers to face (cf. St Gregory). Bishops and priests should see in these words the greatness and responsibility of the task confided to them. The mission of the apostle is that of Christ himself.

(b) He breathed on them . . .

An ancient piece of Hebrew symbolism which signified the communication of something vital to the one who receives it. The first time it appears in the Scriptures is in the case of Adam. Elias breathed life into the widow's son. The Liturgy continues to use this symbol frequently. The Lord, then, wishes to communicate something to the apostles, something vital which is his. What is it?

(c) Receive the Holy Spirit:

There is more than one coming of the Holy Ghost. He already dwells in the souls of these disciples, because they are in a state of grace. If the Holy Spirit comes with his gifts in confirmation and also at the moment of baptism is there any reason why he should not come again now, bringing with him the gift of pardon? What is there that can unite us to Christ in love and holiness better than pardon for our sins?

(d) When you forgive men's sins they are forgiven . . .

Later we shall see the doctrine more in detail; at the moment it is enough for us to remember that the work of redemption has begun; the fruits of the Passion are now being applied.

3. *The unbelief of Thomas:*

Thomas, who is also called Didymus . . .

He must have been well known by this Greek translation of his name in the place where St John wrote, since every time he refers to him he uses this word (John 11. 16).

We know' something of his character from these scenes. He was a pessimist, who thought of death as soon as there was any mention of going to Bethany (John 11.16). He was obstinate and argumentative: But, Lord, we do not know' where thou art going; how are we to know the way there? (John 14. 5). Until I have seen the mark of the nails . . . (John 20. 25). But he was also generous: Let us go too and be

killed along with him (John II. 16). Ricciotti calls him the prince of the critical and the positivists. What was his fault here? Surely not merely that of asking for evidence, since faith has to be reasonable; but rather that of closing one's eyes when the evidence is abundant. He is a strong-minded man who despises the testimony of poor men who are easily led by an illusion!

The second apparition

The unbelief of the Jews is due to their pride; that of Thomas to narrowness of outlook. Jesus convinces him, but not without a reproach.

1. *Thou art my Lord and my God:*

Eight days later the scene is reproduced. What must have been Thomas's surprise and dismay when he saw our Lord? The Master looks at him and calls him: Let me have thy finger; see, here are my hands. The reply of the disciple could not be more rapid: Thou art my Lord and my God. The phrase indicates a complete confession and an invocation.

2. *Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have learned to believe:*

We need not give these words too technical a significance, as if our Lord were writing a treatise on faith. The meaning of the words is: You needed to see in order to believe. The full meaning then is: You, Thomas, would not take the word evenofwitnesseswhosawme, you had to see for yourself. Blessed are they who are more simple than you are and who reach the true faith without demanding such absolute evidence. Reasonable faith rests on the motives ofcredibility, but these can do no more than prove to a man that he should believe. The submission of his intellect to God is a free act. As time and space remove us more and more from the age in which Christ lived there is greater freedom for the passions and the will to introduce doubts and hesitations which put off the moment of acceptance of the truth. This only serves to increase the merits of those who, over-riding all obstacles, submit their minds and hearts to the truth. We enjoy all the merits and graces of those who saw the Lord, but in one way our faith is even more meritorious than theirs, because we do not see with the eyes of the body the miracles and the proofs of his divinity.

We must also praise St Thomas because he did not merely believe in the resurrection but also in the divinity which lay hidden behind that glorified body.

The dogma of penance

The Council of Trent has defined that the words: Receive the Holy Spirit; when you forgive men's sins they are forgiven, when

you hold them bound, they are bound, refer to the true power of absolving from sin by the judicial act of the sacrament of penance.

Theologians go still further and deduce from these words a complete proof. Here we may leave on one side the preliminaries, such as the breathing on the apostles and the confiding to them of the mission of Christ himself, and insist merely on the words themselves.

There are two members in the phrase, both of which are intended to describe the action of the apostles and its ratification in heaven. It would therefore be against all the laws of valid interpretation to understand the first *remittuntur* of the Vulgate in one sense and the second in another.

Who will deny that these sins are really and truly forgiven in heaven? Therefore, in the same real sense, they are forgiven by the apostles. However, the apostles do not merely forgive, they also *bind*. This second power would be useless and a mere mockery if sins could be forgiven outside the tribunal of penance as a normal thing, say, for instance, by an act of faith in Christ. If it is insisted that the words refer to the power to baptize or to preach then the second half of the verse has no real meaning at all.

We are left with the conclusion that our Lord used the words in this passage in that sense in which he had used them on former occasions. (Cf. Matt. 9. 2, 12. 6, 12. 31; John 1. 9, 2. 12.)

The judicial nature of the sacrament of penance

If we continue the analysis of the text it is possible to demonstrate from it that the power to forgive sins is a true judicial authority, exercised in the name of the Head of the society. The words I *am sending you out in my turn* are an explanation of the sacerdotal power in general, since the priest always acts as a minister of Christ in all that he does. In this particular case this power has a twofold aspect, that of absolving or of leaving a man subject to his sins. In fact, the Greek word for *bound* has the meaning given to it in the Knox translation; i.e. it means rather more than to leave a person in the same state since it contains the idea of binding him down to a particular authority or power. The judicial sentence of the tribunal of penance either absolves or obliges a person to return to that same tribunal.

The logical consequence of this is confession, since a judge must know the matter before he can really pass a just sentence.

SECTION III. THE FATHERS

I. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

(In Homily 86 on St John, Chrysostom explains chapter 20 up to verse 24, and finishes the chapter in the following homily. Here

certain extracts have been chosen which relate to the power of the priest and to the priesthood itself.)

1. *I am sending you: the Priest:*

Love and esteem of the faithful for the priest:

Let us do all we can, then, to possess the Holy Spirit and to reverence with all honour those to whom his power has been confided. In truth, great is this priestly dignity. When you forgive men's sins, they are forgiven (John 20. 23). For this reason St Paul adds: Obey those who have charge over you and yield to their will (Heb. 13. 17). Hold them in great esteem. You look after your own affairs and if they go well then there is no need for you to give an account of those of others; while the priest, even though his own life may be sound, if he does not look after yours and others under his charge, will go to hell with the evil ones. Often, although his own sins do not cause him to lose his soul, yours do if he has not been faithful to his obligations. Knowing their great danger, then, show them much affection. St Paul implies this when he says: They are keeping unwearied watch over your souls because they know they will have an account to give (Heb. 13. 17). For which reason it is just that they should enjoy your esteem. . . . While the priest enjoys your esteem he can guide your affairs perfectly; but if you cause him to get discouraged his hands will lose their vigour and you will expose him to the danger of perishing with you in the waves, no matter how strong his spirit may be. Remember what Christ said of the Jews: The Scribes and Pharisees . . . have established themselves in the place from which Moses used to teach; do what they tell you, then; continue to observe what they tell you (Matt. 23. 2-3). Now he would have to say: In the place from which Christ used to teach, since it is his doctrine which they have received. For this reason St Paul also says: We are Christ's ambassadors, then, and God appeals to you through us (2 Cor. 5. 20).

. . . When God chooses are we going to despise the object of his choice, calumniate him, load him with a thousand insults and, having been warned not to judge our brethren, sharpen our tongues against the priests? What defence can there be for such conduct, since not seeing the beam which is in our own eye, we examine so critically the mote which is in another's? Do you not know that, when you judge like this, you are preparing a more terrible judgement for yourselves? I do not say this in order to defend those who administer the sacraments unworthily; rather I have pity for them and weep for them; however, I do not consider it just that they should be judged by their subjects, much less by the simple and ignorant. Even supposing their life to be unworthy, you, provided you take heed to the priest, will come to no harm. . . . Because it is not the pure soul which attracts you by its very purity; rather it is

the work of grace. That which is entrusted to the priest only God can give, and however great may be human virtue, it will always be less than that grace. . . . Neither angel or archangel has any power over these gifts of God; all are administered by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; the priest merely lends his contribution, his hand and tongue. It would not be right that those who are of the household of the faith should be harmed in anything touching the sacraments of salvation by the evil in those who administer them.

2. *The grandeur of the Christian Priesthood:*

Although it is true that the priesthood is exercised on earth, still it pertains rather to the order of heavenly things, and rightly so. It was no man, angel or archangel, nor indeed any created power which instituted this hierarchy, but the Consoling Spirit himself, thus bringing it about that, while still in mortal flesh, men could think of exercising the ministry of angels. For which reason the priest should be as pure as if he were in heaven, in the midst of the angelic powers. . . . Think of the Lord crucified and lying as a victim on the altar; look at the priest who presides over this sacrifice and prays; look at all those present, bathed and washed in that precious blood and tell me then if you think that you are still among men or if you do not rather consider yourself caught up into heaven. . . .

3. *The power of pardon:*

To dwellers on earth it has been granted to dispose of the treasures of heaven and to men God confided a power which neither angels nor archangels ever attained; for it was not to these that it was said: I promise you, all that you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and all that you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Matt. 18. 18). It is true that those who wield power on earth have the authority to bind, but only the body; while this priestly bond holds the very soul and reaches heaven, for what the priests do here below God ratifies in heaven and what the slave delivers as sentence the Lord confirms. What else is this but to grant to them the very powers of heaven? He says: When you forgive men's sins they are forgiven, when you hold them bound they are bound (John 20. 23). Can there be a greater power than this? But I see that all this judgement has been placed by the Son in the hands of his priests. Therefore it may well be said that, on being elevated to such a sublime dignity, they have been translated to heaven, transcending our human nature as if they were free from our human passions.

4. *The priest as father:*

There is little or nothing that human fathers can do for their children when these have offended against one of the great ones of the earth; but the priests can reconcile us, not with earthly emperors, or princes, but with God himself, who is angry with us.

II. ST AUGUSTINE

Sermons on the Feast

(In Semi. 259, PL·. 38, 1196, St Augustine develops the idea that after the resurrection comes the eighth day, that is eternal glory. He lays emphasis on the idea that we must be merciful in this life.)

That life is one which only those can understand who experience it, and only those can experience it who believe. If you ask me to show you what God has promised I cannot do so; but you have just heard that they are blessed who do not see, but who believe. Do you wish to see that life ? I also. Let us then all believe together and we shall see it together. . . . Would it be right that Christ should have to come down and show us his wounds in order that we might believe ?

1. *Mercy:*

I do not think you could complain were God to choose the best of his creation and make you a present of it. Yet what he does give you is not any created thing, but that which is his own, that you may rejoice in it.

And do you think that it is through any merit of yours ? If you want to see them look at your sins and hear the sentence.... Forget them, lest they terrify you, or better still, keep them in mind that your pride may not let you forget his mercy....

Be merciful because our sins are very great. There is no other peace, no other road by which we may attain to God and be reconciled with him whom we have offended with such danger to ourselves. One day we shall find ourselves before him and would to God that on that day our works may speak for us in such a way that they overcome our sins. That which is greater shall carry away the prize; if it is sin, punishments; if good works, rest.

2. *Alnis deeds:*

The Church knows two kinds of mercy, one which costs neither money nor work and the other which does. The former . . . consists in pardoning anyone who has offended us, and to give this alms we have one treasure—our heart.

Think how God is more generous than we are, because you pardon a man who has offended against another man, while he pardons you who have sinned against God. ... In the second kind of alms you give a little bread and he gives you salvation; you give a cup of water and he puts to your lips the chalice of wisdom. Is there any comparison between what is given and what is received ?

3. *The Church—motive of credibility:*

We do not believe unless ve see. I hen you will have to confess that you do not even know who are your parents. . . . If, through

lack of belief, human society disappears, how much more important is divine faith since, if it is lacking, we do not merely destroy the friendship of men, but the whole of religion, thus causing the greatest of miseries....

You who think that we have not sufficient proofs to convince you concerning that Christ whom you do not see, think of that which you do see. The Church herself, with loving words, calls to you, saying: I whom you see grow and bring forth fruit have not always been as I am now. When God blessed Abraham in those words: All the races of the world shall find a blessing through thy posterity (Gen. 22. 17) he was making that promise to me ... I am the one of whom the Psalmist sings: At thy right hand stands the queen in a vesture of gold, all hung about with embroidery (Ps. 44. 10)...

Look at me with attention and think well on what you see, because now it is not a question of telling you about passed things or foretelling the future; rather you are being shown something which is before your very eyes. Or does it seem a small, insignificant thing, that divine miracle by which the whole human race has run after a man who was crucified? You may not have seen the fulfilment of that which was prophesied of Christ's birth: Behold a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son, but you have seen fulfilled that which was announced to Abraham: All the races of the world shall find a blessing in thy posterity. . . . But even though you may not have seen any of these things, you have seen the Church, of whom it has been said: Strength and stronghold, Lord, refuge in time of peril, shall not the Gentiles themselves come to thee from the ends of the earth, confessing that all their patrimony is but a heritage of lies, that their idols cannot avail them (Jerem. 16. 19). And do not think that, because the prophecy says that the Gentiles shall come from the ends of the earth, they must make for some determined place. Understand once for all, if you are able, that the nations do not approach the God of the Christians through physical movement but by faith, according to the prophet. . . . *(De Fide Rerum quae non videntur,* PL. 40. 71).

III. ST GREGORY THE GREAT

1. *The first apparition:*

(a) Palpable and incorruptible:

... By this fact (of the resurrection) he showed us two things which are at the same time wonderful by the standards of human reason and contradictory. He showed us a body which after the resurrection was incapable of corruption and palpable; because it is usual and necessary that what is palpable is corruptible and that which cannot be felt is incorruptible. ... In a wonderful and

* Cf. Hom. 26; PL 76, 1235 ff.

inexplicable manner our Redeemer showed us his incorruptible body after his resurrection, a body which could also be felt, to invite us to the reward through the sight of the incorruptible and confirming us in our faith by showing it to be palpable. He showed himself both incorruptible and palpable to prove that after his resurrection his body was of the same nature as before, but possessing a different glorv.

(b) The mission of suffering:

And he said to them: Peace be upon you : I came upon an errand from my Father, and now I am sending you out in my turn (John 20. 21). That is: As God the Father sent me, who am also God, so I as man, send you who are also men.

God willed that his Son should come into this world to suffer yet not for one moment did he cease to love him. The Lord sent the apostles whom he had chosen, not to enjoy the good things of this world, but as he was sent, that is, to suffer. Just as the Son was loved by the Father and yet was sent to suffer, so the Lord loved his apostles yet sent them into the world to suffer.

(c) *The Spirit of love:*

With that, he breathed on them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit. We may ask: How is it that our Lord gave the Holy Spirit once when he was still on earth and then again when he was in heaven ?... Because there are two precepts of charity, namely, the love of God and of our neighbour. The Holy Spirit was given while Christ was on earth so that the neighbour should be loved; he is given from heaven that men may love God. Just as there is only one charity and two precepts of charity, so there is only one Spirit but two gifts. He was given first while our Lord was on earth and then when he was in heaven because through love for our neighbour we learn how to attain to the love of God.

(d) The dignity and responsibility of a judge:

The bishops now occupy their (the apostles') place, and those who attain to this grade of the ecclesiastical hierarchy receive the power to bind and loose. It is a great honour, but the responsibility which it supposes is also great. It is a hard thing to be made judge of the lives of others if one does not know how to live one's own life in a proper manner.

Before absolving or binding his subjects he must first weigh their offences carefully, together with any previous penance which has been performed, without ever allowing himself to be swayed by caprice or by dislike.

(c) Oral confession:

We must always keep it in mind that we should free by our pastoral authority those whom, our Lord has restored to life by his

grace, and this resurrection comes about through confession of sin. Thus Christ did not say to Lazarus: Return to life: but, Come forth. The sinner who hides his faults in his conscience really hides himself and takes refuge within himself; but the dead comes forth when that sinner confesses his crimes. To Lazarus it was said: Come forth; which is the same as saying to anyone dead in sin: Why do you hide your guilt within your conscience? Now is the time to come forth by means of confession. Let the dead come forth, that is to say, let him confess his sin if he be a sinner. The disciples unbound him who came out of the tomb that the pastors of the lurch may excuse and forgive the crime of the man who is not ashamed to confess what he has done. . . .

2. *St Thomas'.*

Divine mercy acted in a wonderful way, permitting that the disciple who doubted the story of the rest, on touching the wounds of his Master should cure in us the wounds of unbelief. Because the unbelief of Thomas was worth more to us than the faith of the others who believed. . . .

He touched and exclaimed: My Lord and my God. Jesus said to him: Thou hast learned to believe, Thomas, because thou hast seen me. That which is evident is not the object of faith, but of knowledge. When Thomas saw and felt, then, why was it said to him: Thou hast learned to believe, Thomas, because thou hast seen me? He saw one thing and believed another, because the divinity could not be seen by any mortal. He saw the man and confessed the godhead. . . .

IV. ST BERNARD

(Extracts from Serm. 61 on the Canticle of Canticles.)

The Sacred Wounds

Where can our weak bodies find a sure place of refuge except in the wounds of our Lord? I remain there with so much the more security because he is so powerful to save me. The world may rage, the body oppress me, the devil extend his snares for me; but I do not fall, since I am on firm rock. If I should commit some grave fault then my conscience will afflict me with remorse, no doubt, but I shall not despair because of it, remembering the wounds of my Lord, for he has been covered with wounds for my sins (Isaias 53. 5).

From which it can be seen how great was the error of him who said: Guilt like mine is too great to find forgiveness (Gen. 4. 13). He was not one of Christ's members and therefore the merits of Christ were not his, because he did not belong to that Divine Head. I, on the other hand, look for what I cannot find in myself in the Saviour, full of goodness and mercy, which is poured out through

the wounds in his sacred Body, for his enemies pierced his hands and feet and opened his side with a lance. From these wounds I can obtain honey from the rock and a sweet oil from the hard cliff; I can taste and see how sweet is the Lord. . . . Those nails with which he has been pierced have become for me precious keys which have opened the treasury of his secrets that I might see his will.... Those nails and these wounds shout continually abroad the fact that God is truly in Christ and that he reconciles the world to himself. The cruel steel pierced his heart that he might know how to have compassion on my weaknesses. The secret of his heart is seen through the wounds in his body; we can now contemplate the sublime mystery of the mercy of our God, who has made the sun shine on us from on high... . There is nothing, Lord, which can show how meek you are, how kind and so full of mercy as these wounds. There is no one who has such compassion as he who lays down his life for the condemned and those sentenced to death.

... Therefore your merit is the mercy of the Lord. I am certainly not poor in merits while he is rich in mercy. If his mercies are great I am richer in merits. And what if I feel myself guilty of many sins? Certainly; there are more merits: for where sin abounded grace does more abound (Rom. 5. 20). Your justice, Lord, is eternal; and what is there so wide as eternity? Your justice, which is eternal and widespread, can cover all. In me it will cover the multitude of my sins; but what will it cover in you Lord, except treasures of mercy and infinite riches of goodness?

SECTION IV. THEOLOGIANS

I. ST THOMAS AQUINAS

A: Peace (2-2. q. 29. a. 1-4)

Peace is the tranquillity of order, which tranquillity consists in all the appetitive movements in a man being set at rest together *(ad.* 1).

From the very fact that a man desires a certain thing it follows that he desires to obtain what he desires, and, in consequence, to remove whatever may be an obstacle to his attaining it. Now a man may be hindered from obtaining the good he desires, by a contrary desire either of his own or of some other, and both are removed by peace, as stated above. Hence it follows of necessity that whoever desires anything, desires to attain with tranquillity and without hindrance to that which he desires: and this is what is meant by peace *(ibid.* art. 2. c.).

Peace gives calm and unity to the appetite. Now, just as an appetite may tend to what is good simply, or to what is good apparently, so too, peace may be either true or apparent. There can be no true

peace except where the appetite is directed to what is truly good, since every evil, though it may appear good in a way, so as to calm the appetite in some respect, has, nevertheless many defects, which cause the appetite to remain restless and disturbed. Lienee true peace is only in good men and about good things. The peace of the wicked is not a true peace but a semblance thereof.. . *(ibid.* art. 2, *ad yum.* Cf. *ad ^um).*

Peace implies a twofold union ... the first is the result of one's own appetites being directed to one object; while the other results from one's own appetite being united with the appetite of another: and each of these unions is effected by charity: the first in so far as man loves God with his whole heart, by referring all things to him, so that all his desires tend to one object; the second, in so far as we love our neighbour as ourselves, the result being that we wish to fulfil our neighbour's will as though it were ours : hence it is reckoned a sign of friendship if people make choice of the same things, and Tully says that friends like and dislike the same things *(ibid.* art. 3,3).

B : The Sacrament of Penance

The power to forgive sins:

The power of the keys:

In material things a key is an instrument for opening a door. Now, the door of the kingdom is closed to us through sin, both as to the stain and as to the debt of punishment. Wherefore the power of removing this obstacle is called a key (Suppl. q. 17. a. 1. c).

Since the sacraments of which the Church is built flowed from the side of Christ while he lay asleep on the cross, the efficacy of the Passion abides in the sacraments of the Church. Wherefore a certain power for the removal of the aforesaid obstacle is bestowed on the ministers of the Church, who are the dispensors of the sacraments, not by their own, but by a Divine power and by the Passion of Christ. This power is called metaphorically the Church's key and is the key of ministry *(ibid.* cf. q. 19. a. 2).

C: Effects of the Sacrament of Penance

i. *All sins can be forgiven in this life:*

The fact that a sin cannot be taken away by Penance may happen in two ways: first because of the impossibility of repenting of sin; secondly, because of penance being unable to blot out a sin. In the first way the sins of the demons and of men who are lost cannot be blotted out by Penance, because their will is confirmed in evil. . . . Nevertheless no sin of a wayfarer can be such as that, because his will is flexible to good and evil. Wherefore to say that in this life there is any sin of which one cannot repent is erroneous, first because this would destroy free will, secondly because this would be

derogatory to the power of grace, whereby the heart of any sinner whatsoever can be moved to repent, according to Prov. 21. 1....

It is erroneous to say that any sin cannot be pardoned through true Penance. *First* because *this is* contrary' to Divine mercy, of which it is written *(Joel 2.* 13) that *God is gracious and merciful,* patient and rich in mercy, and ready to repent *of the evil; for in* a manner God would be overcome by man, if man *wished* a sin to be *blotted out, which God were unwilling to blot out. Secondly, because this would be derogatory to the* power of Christ's Passion, through which Penance produces its *effect,* as do the *other sacraments* . . . (1 *John* 2. 2).

2. *Provided we repent of them:*

It is impossible for a mortal actual sin to be pardoned without penance if we speak of penance as a virtue. . . . It is impossible *for God to pardon* a man for his *offence, without his will being changed. Now, the offence of mortal sin is due to man's will being turned* away from God through being turned to some mutable good. Consequently, for the pardon of *this offence against God it is necessary' for man's* will to be so changed as to turn to God and to renounce *having turned to something else in the aforesaid manner, together with* a purpose *of* amendment: all of *which belongs to* penance as a virtue *(ibid.* 3. q. 86. a. 2. c. Cf. a. 3. c).

3. *Contrition:*

Pride is the beginning of all sin, because *thereby a* man *clings to his own judgement,* and strays from the *Divine commandments.* Consequently, that *which destroys sin must needs* make man give up his own judgement. Now he that persists in his own judgement is called metaphorically rigid and hard; wherefore anyone is said to be broken when he is tom from his own judgement. . . . And since for remission of sin it is necessary' that man should put aside entirely his attachment to sin, which implies a certain state of continuity and solidity in his mind, therefore it is that the act through which sin is cast aside is called contrition metaphorically (suppi, q. i. a. 1. c).

Contrition includes a *twofold sorrow for sin. One is in the sensitive* part and is a passion. This does not belong essentially to contrition as an act of virtue, but is rather its effect. For just as the virtue of penance inflicts outward punishment on the body, in order to compensate for the offence done to God through the instrumentality of the bodilyr members, so does it inflict on the concupiscible part of the soul a punishment, viz. the aforesaid sorrow, because the concupiscible also co-operated in the sinful deeds. Nevertheless, this sorrow may belong to contrition taken as part of the sacrament, since the nature of a sacrament is that it consists not only of internal but also of external acts and sensible things.—The other sorrow is in

the will and is nothing else save displeasure for some evil, for the emotions of the will are named after the passion . . . (*ibid.* a. 2. *ad \um*).

4. *Confession:*

(a) Necessary for salvation:

Christ's Passion, without whose power neither original nor actual sin is remitted, produces its effects in us through the reception of the sacraments which derive their efficacy from it. Wherefore, for the remission of both original and actual sin a sacrament *of* the Church is necessary, received either actually or at least in desire.... Consequently, those sacraments which are ordained as remedies for sin which is incompatible with salvation are necessary for salvation: and so just as Baptism, whereby original sin is blotted out, is necessary for salvation, so also is the sacrament of Penance. And just as a man through asking to be baptized submits to the ministers of the Church, to whom the dispensation of that sacrament belongs, even so, by confessing his sin, a man submits to a minister of the Church, that through the sacrament of Penance dispensed by him, he may receive the pardon of his sins: nor can the minister apply a fitting remedy unless he be acquainted with the sin, which knowledge he acquires through the penitent's confession. Wherefore confession is necessary for the salvation of a man who has fallen into a mortal actual sin (*ibid.* q. 6. a. 1. c).

(b) Qualities of a good confession:

St Thomas enumerates the following conditions for a good confession, taken from Peter Lombard:

Simple, humble, pure, faithful;
frequent, undisguised, discreet, voluntary, shamefaced;
entire, secret, tearful, not delayed;
courageously accusing, ready to obey.

He reasons them out as follows:

i. *A distinction.* Some of these conditions are essential to confession and some are required for its well-being (suppl. q. 9. a. 4. c).

ii. *Conditions related to the virtue as such.* The first is knowledge, in respect of which confession is said to be discreet, in as much as prudence is required in every act of virtue: and this discretion consists in giving greater weight to greater sins. The second condition is choice, because acts of virtue should be voluntary, and in this respect confession is said to be voluntary. The third condition is that the act be done for a particular purpose, viz. the due end, and in this respect confession is said to be pure, i.e. with a right intention. The fourth condition is that one should act immovably, and in this respect it is said that confession should be courageous, viz. that the truth should not be forsaken through shame.

iii. *Conditions demanded by the virtue ofpenance.* Now confession is an act of the virtue of penance. First of all it takes its origin in the horror which one conceives for the shamefulness of sin, and in this respect confession should be full of shame, so as not to be a boastful account of one's sins, by reason of some worldly vanity accompanying it. Then it goes on to deplore the sin committed, and in this respect it is said to be tearful. Thirdly it culminates in self-abjection, and in this respect it should be humble, so that one confesses one's misery and weakness.

iv. *Qualities which derivefrom the very nature ofconfession.* By reason of its very nature, viz. confession, this act is one of manifestation: which manifestation can be hindered by four things: first by falsehood, and in this respect confession is said to be faithful, i.e. true. Secondly, by the use of vague words, and against this confession is said to be open, i.e. not wrapped up in vague words; thirdly, by multiplicity of words, in which respect it is said to be simple, indicating that the penitent should relate only such matters as affect the gravity of the sin; fourthly, none of those things should be suppressed which should be made known, and in this respect confession should be entire.

v. *As part ofa sacrament.* In so far as confession is part of a sacrament it is subject to the judgement of the priest who is the minister of the sacrament. Wherefore it should be an accusation on the part of the penitent, who should manifest his readiness to obey the priest, should be secret as regards the nature of the court wherein the hidden affairs of conscience are tried.

vi. *Conditions affecting the well-being of confession.* The well-being of confession requires that it should be frequent, and not delayed, i.e. that the sinner should confess at once.

5. *Satisfaction:*

(a) Looks to the past and future:

Justice aims not only at removing inequality already existing, by punishing the past fault, but also at safeguarding equality for the future, because according to the Philosopher, punishments are medicinal. Wherefore satisfaction which is the act of justice inflicting punishment, is a medicine healing past sins and preserving from future sins; so that when one man makes satisfaction to another, he offers compensation for the past and takes heed for the future.

(b) Definitions:

Accordingly, satisfaction may be defined in two ways, first with regard to past sin, which it heals by making compensation, and thus it is defined as compensation for an inflicted injury according to the equality of justice. . . . Secondly, satisfaction may be defined, considered as preserving us from future sins; and as Augustine defines it (satisfaction is to uproot the causes of sins, and to give

no opening to the suggestions thereof).. . . Now preservation from bodily sickness is assured by removing the causes from which the sickness may come, for if they be taken away the sickness cannot follow. But it is not thus in spiritual diseases, for the free-will cannot be forced, so that even in the presence of their causes they can, though with difficulty, be avoided, while they can be incurred even when their causes are removed. Hence he puts two things in the definition of satisfaction, viz. removal of the causes, as to the first, and the free-will's refusal to sin.

(c) The main satisfactory works:

If the scourges, which are inflicted by God on account of sin, become in some way the act of the sufferer, they acquire a satisfactory character. Now, they become the act of the sufferer in so far as he accepts them for the cleansing of his sins, by taking advantage of them patiently. If, however, he refuses to submit to them patiently, then they do not become his personal act in any way, and are not of a satisfactory, but merely of a vindictive character (suppl. q. 15. a. 2. c). Satisfaction should be of such a nature as to involve something taken away from us for the honour of God. Now, we have but three kinds of goods, bodily, spiritual, and goods of fortune, or external goods. By almsdeeds we deprive ourselves of some goods of fortune, and by fasting we retrench goods of the body. As to goods of the soul, there is no need to deprive ourselves of any of them, either in whole or in part, since thereby we become acceptable to God, but we should submit them entirely to God, which is done by prayer *(ibid.* a. 3. c).

This number is shown to be suitable in so far as satisfaction uproots the causes of sin, for these are reckoned to be three (1 John 2.16), viz. concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes and the pride of life. Fasting is directed against the concupiscence of the flesh, almsdeeds against concupiscence of the eyes and prayer against the pride of life, as Augustine says *(Enarr.* in Ps. 42).

This number is also shown to be suitable in so far as satisfaction does not open a way to the suggestions of sin, because every sin is committed either against God, and this is prevented by prayer, or against our neighbour, and this is remedied by almsdeeds, or against ourselves, and this is forestalled by fasting *(ibid.').*

IL ST BONAVENTURE

1. *The articles offaith:*

So far as the articles of faith are concerned we have to point out that, even though we are bound to believe by faith many things which are above reason and in general everything contained in the

♦From the *Breviloquium*

canonical books of sacred Scripture, still in a special way those things are called articles of faith which are contained in the Apostles' Creed.

2. *Grace and authority in faith:*

Since the First Principle is in himself supreme truth and goodness, while in his works he is also supreme justice and mercy; and since to the supreme truth is owed first assent, to supreme goodness fenent love, to supreme justice total submission and to supreme mercy confident appeal; and since grace renders our minds fit to give due cult to the Supreme Principle, we must conclude that grace also makes us ready to believe all that has to be believed, to love as we ought, to work and pray as we should according to the demands of supreme truth, goodness, justice and mercy as we find it in the Blessed Trinity'.

Since it is necessary' to believe the truth, and the greater the truth the more firm our faith and since the truth of the First Principle is superior to and more evident than any created truth—indeed more than all the light of reason; therefore, in order that our reason should be duly· prepared to believe as it should, it is necessary' that it should give greater belief to the truth of the First Principle than to itself, bringing itself into captivity, so to speak, in honour of Christ. Thus it will believe not only those things which are in conformity with reason, but also that which is above reason and against the experiences of the senses. If it refuses to do this then it is not giving due reverence to the supreme Truth, since it prefers the judgement of reason to the dictates of Eternal Light, which supposes pride and undue self-esteem.

III. FAITH AND REASON

The phrase: 'blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have learned to believe' requires theological explanation if it is not to suffer from misinterpretations. The following propositions may help:

i. Faith is assent to truths revealed by God; by which it is meant that faith is an act of reason or of the intellect; not a mere sentimental impulse.

2. The motive for this assent is the authority of God. We do not believe because we can prove the intrinsic value or convenience of the object of our faith, but because God, who can neither deceive or be deceived, has proposed them for our belief. In this way our faith is more secure even than the assent to the principles we can know by human reason.

3. Man, before assenting to the revealed truth, must be convinced by reason that God has revealed these truths. This can be expressed in another form by saying that faith must be reasonable. God, the

author of reason, docs not expect us to go against it, while the correct use of it pre-supposes that, before giving our consent and imposing grave obligations on ourselves by so doing, we should be certain that God has spoken, cither directly or indirectly, through apostles, prophets, the inspired writers of Scripture or his Church, etc.

4. The assent of faith is free. We must never forget the influence of the will on the acts of the intellect. When a truth is self-evident, for example, that the sun is now shining, the will has no part at all to play in the assent to that truth. But when the proofs for a thing are not evident or come from a long chain of reasoning, even though they may be of such a nature that they should produce certitude so that the intellect has no rational motive for not giving its assent, still the will, should it so desire, can always find a weak spot through which it can instil doubt.

This happens frequently in historical studies, in which the prejudice of the author influences the serene interpretation of documents which are, in themselves, quite clear.

The will, even though it has no right to intervene, does so with greater frequency whenever there is opposition between what we have to believe and our own convenience, way of life, passions, etc.

We may imagine two examples. In the first the motives for credibility are evident. Thomas sees Christ work miracles, rise from the dead and so on. In the light of such marvels Thomas should conclude God is with Jesus and I should admit what he says to be true. Is Thomas free in the face of such evidence? Yes; because the will can twist it if it pleases, as in the case of the Jews, who were satisfied to attribute Christ's miracles to the power of Satan. There is also another way out, Thomas could still refuse to believe God even though he is certain that God has spoken. The proofs Christ gave lead to one conclusion—you must believe when God speaks. But Thomas is still free to refuse that assent.

The second case is even more simple. Now it is not Thomas, but ourselves. We have the proofs, but we have not seen them. The ordinary people have hardly studied them, relying on the teaching of parents or priests. Who will deny that, in such a case, the will has a wide field to discover breaches into which it can pour doubt? Is not this the real cause of many apostasies?

We are free in our assent because the proofs always leave man in such a position that he can bend his intellect one way or the other, and we are more free because in the case of those who have not seen the proofs with their own eyes, as Thomas did, there is an even wider field for the activity of the passions to influence the will and blind the mind.

5. Merit depends on freedom. In fact, freedom is an indispensable condition of merit, so that whatever diminishes freedom diminishes

responsibility, and consequently, merit. We may contrast what Thomas had to go through, with the Lord's wounds before his eyes, in order to retract his former disbelief with the case of a modern sceptic or rationalist who is faced with conversion. If we contrast the evidence of the proofs given to Thomas with that which we possess, even though the latter are sufficient to produce moral certainty but not to exclude all irrational doubt or influence of the passion, we shall understand clearly what is meant by the phrase; Blessed arc those who have not seen, and yet have learned to believe.

SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. FRAY LUIS DE LEON

1. *Through Christ we know God:*

We say that Christ made man is the Face of God, because as each of us is known by his features, so God reveals himself to us in him, showing us clearly what he is. So true is this that no single creature, not even all of them taken together, can reveal to us in such sharpness of image or with so much light the Nature of God as does Christ. This he does through his soul, his body, his instincts, thoughts, words and deeds—all, in fact that belongs to his office.

2. *The soul of Christj image of God:*

(a) Because God knows and has before his eyes all that is or could be. The soul of Christ also sees all that was, is and will be. In God's knowledge lies the reason for all things, and in this soul the knowledge of all arts and sciences.

(b) In his being:

God is the fount of all being; and the soul of Christ is the source of all good being; I mean all the good things of grace and justice, for it is his grace which is poured out on us. He is not merely full of grace in God's sight for his own benefit, but for ours also.

He possesses the fulness of justice by which all can be made just. Of his fulness we have all received (John i. 16).

Finally, God creates and sustains the universe, guiding it and deriving honour from it. The soul of Christ re-creates, defends and repairs, inspires and encourages towards good all men, as far as in him lies.

(c) In his meekness:

He says of himself that he is meek and humble and invites us to learn of him, that we may have the same qualities. . . . And we must not think that Christ is meek and humble merely because of the grace which is in him. Just as by natural inclination men tend towards virtue, some towards one, some towards another, so the human

nature of Christ by its very make-up is full of meekness and humility. However, although Christ was by nature and by grace perfectly humble and meek, on the other hand he possessed such greatness of soul that he is also the King of men, Lord of the angels, Head of all things, to be adored by all, to be at God's right hand, united with him and one Person with him. Surely this is nothing else but the perfect image of God ?

(d) In his love :

What shall I say of the love God has for us and the charity towards us which burns in the soul of Christ ? What things God does for men and what the humanity of Christ has suffered for them!... So that we might not suffer the pains of hell and that we might enjoy the rewards of heaven, Christ suffered prison, blows and a dreadful death. And to the same end God, to λνϊιοιη such suffering in his own nature was impossible, sought for and found a way of suffering in his own person. That burning and ardent will Christ had to die for men was but a flame which was lighted from that fire of love and desire which bums in the will of God, who became man for us. (Extracts taken from *Faces o Cara de Dios.* BAC. *Obras Completas,* 2a Edit. pp. 422-3.)

II. BLESSED JOHN OF AVILA

(He wrote a complete treatise on faith in his book entitled *Audi, filia,* from which this summary is taken.)

I. *The reasonableness offaith:*

(a) Since it is the duty of the creature to obey its creator with all the power of its being, and since God is a spirit, our principal acts of obedience will flow from that spirit through which we are most like God. The two powers of the soul are the intellect and the will, and both should surrender themselves to God in self-sacrifice, the one by obeying the divine laws against its own inclinations and the other by belief in God's word. If the intellect were only to assent to things discovered by itself there would be no question of obedience at all ; it must assent to things which it does not itself see clearly.

(b) God's goodness demands love and his truth belief. Just as love requires that we should deny ourselves and pour ourselves out for the one we love, so God's very truth demands that, prescinding from our opinion, we should believe in his with even greater firmness.

2. *The grace and thefirmness offaith:*

In spite of the fact that it is reasonable, faith is such a great thing that man is incapable of believing by his own powers, even though he had before his very eyes the evidence *of* miracles. Just as

only God, through his Church, can command us to believe, so only he can give us the power to believe.

The motives of credibility are not capable of giving to our faith that firmness which it possesses, because they cannot exclude an unreasonable doubt or scruple. But it is God who communicates to us such strength that man says to all the motives by which he has been led to believe, as the Samaritans said to the woman: We believe now; we have heard him for ourselves, and we recognize that he is indeed the Saviour of the world (John 4. 42).

Grace gives faith a special strength, because 'just as God raises man to a supernatural destiny, the vision of himself face to face in heaven, in like manner he is not content to have man believe as man only, that is through motives, miracles or reasons. Instead, raising him above himself, he gave him supernatural powers with which to believe, not doubtingly or in fear, as a man would, but with that certainty and security which befits the things of God. Just as the compass needle swings to the north and is held there, so God moves the intellect, by the faith which he infuses into it, to go straight to him in firm assent, peacefully and with satisfaction. When this faith is perfect it brings with it a light through which, even though it does not permit a man to see that in which he believes, still it does enable him to see how worthy of belief are the things of God. Not only does he not feel sorrow at having to believe, but great joy; as happens in the case of every perfect virtue which acts with facility, firmness and joy' (c. 43, *ibid.* pp. 148-53).

III. ST JOHN EUDES

The mission of the priest and confession

To you it is said: I send you with the same love with which my Father sent me and for the same purpose, to destroy the kingdom of Satan and to establish in the hearts of men the kingdom of God. You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you before even you knew me, before you existed, that you may go forth throughout the whole world bringing forth fruits and that your fruits may last. You have been chosen from among thousands to be the companions of his apostles, his greatest saints, in the greatest of his works—the redemption of the world. You must do your part, by hard work, in self-sacrifice which is all consuming (2 Cor. 12. 15). . . . Remember that, in the confessional, you are doing God's greatest work; do it *digne Deo*.

In the confessional you do the work of doctors, teaching the truths necessary for salvation; you cure sick souls; as shepherds you preserve them from the wolf and, feeding them with the word of God, you prepare them for the divine food of the Eucharist. As mediators λou reconcile men and God; as saviours you apply the

fruits of the redeeming Passion. Like Christ, you must be humble and patient in such a wearisome task, but one which should remind you how much it cost the Saviour to ransom souls. You carry within you the living image of his power and perform the great work of justification, giving men the Holy Spirit and seeking only the fulfilment of his commands.

Above all, you perform the functions of a judge: Through this act if we perform it well, sin is destroyed; grace is given to men. Through it evil is cast out from the souls of the faithful, giving place to the Holy Spirit . . . hell is changed into heaven and from a dwelling place of demons the soul becomes a temple of the godhead. By raising up souls to life in Christ, that which is lacking in the Passion is completed, namely, the application to souls of its fruits.

The bad confessor establishes more firmly the reign of sin. He lulls souls to sleep, thus killing them rather than giving them life. Instead of completing what is lacking in the Passion of Christ he renders it useless, changing children of God into children of the devil. The ignorant, imprudent, negligent confessor is an obstacle in the Church of Christ, since he acts as an agent of the devil rather than as a heavenly teacher. He is like Pilate, not one of the Lord's judges; mediator for the devil and his interests, not those of God. When such a confessor says: I absolve thee, God is passing on him the dreadful sentence: I condemn thee. A judgement which is concerned not with earthly possessions or even with life itself, but rather with eternal glory demands that we should think well on what it is w'e are doing. (Extracts from *The Priest and his mysteries,* translated into Spanish by D. German Jimenez, 1936.)

IV. BOSSUET

The Peace of Christ

(Summary of a sermon preached on this Sunday in Metz, 1658.)

Justice and peace are united in one embrace (Ps. 84. 11), and from that moment they cannot be separated. When men broke with justice there was no longer peace on earth until the coming of our Lord, who returned it to us in that salutation: Peace be to you (John 20.19). Afterwards St Paul publishes this peace when he says: Once justified, then, on the ground of our faith, let us enjoy peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5. 1). The deluge has passed, the floodgates of heaven have been closed. Christ has held back the waters of the divine anger which came to destroy man; the waters have retreated and the dove comes to us with the olive branch; Christ comes to his own and announces that peace reigns once more. The disciples rejoiced, and we too should join in that rejoicing on seeing that peace has been granted to the rebel.

There are three main details of this Gospel story:

(a) After the salutation Christ shows his wounds to the disciples.

(b) The disciples were apart from the world, in a room the doors of which were shut. On seeing their consternation Christ salutes them in peace.

(c) After giving them the Holy Spirit he sends them into the whole world as bearers of his peace.

Christ the peacemaker:

It is a marvel that the peace between God and men should have been achieved by the violent death of God's ambassador. That Christ is God's representative to bring about peace is clear from Ephesians 2.14 and 2 Cor. 5.19. It is also well known that the persons of ambassadors are sacred. But here we have the divine ambassador ill-treated in such a way that the very Person and majesty of God suffers in him. Nevertheless, this death which should bring as a punishment eternal death is the signature of the alliance; that which so often causes nations to go to war disarms the Father. The Father, who was so angry with his creatures and with their crimes, is placated by this, the greatest crime of all!

The blood of Christ which, shed by the Jews, cries out against them, when presented to the Father by Christ, pleads for mercy. But instead of thinking of the crime of the Jews let us remember the obedience of the Son of God. As St Augustine says: Let those executors but come and drink of this blood which they have shed with such cruelty—let them but drink of it through faith and they will obtain pardon.

►B

For this reason Christ shows his wounds to the disciples, that we may find in them the ratification of our peace with God. For the same reason he wished to take them to heaven with him, so that, should the Father ever be angry at the malice of men, he could show once more the reminders of the sacrifice which placated that anger.

We were friends and allies of death (Isaias 28. 15), and now, in order to enjoy peace, we must break with all our old treaties. In the world there exist two cities, intermingled, the Babylon of temporal peace and the heavenly Jerusalem of eternal peace, whose principles are antagonistic and whose citizens live together in the world. . . . These tranquil waters of worldly pleasure pass before our eyes and little by little we allow ourselves to drift along with them until we find ourselves in habitual connivance with the city of evil.

This is the moment. The paschal liturgies will have brought us to the sacrament of confession. Enter with the Apostles into that secret habitation in order that you may be alone with Christ.

When two states are enemies their ambassadors are withdrawn; when peace is declared they return. The peace which has been signed between God and men is perfect and therefore he returns

us his representative. It is clear in that passage of the Gospel: as the Father hath sent inc, I send you. Go out into the whole world and announce to all the pardon of their sins. So wide are your powers that whatsoever you pardon in this world I will ratify in the other. See how the Lord has named his representatives in the earthly Jerusalem. But who shall be our representative in heaven? Jesus himself, who came to bring us peace and who now, after his resurrection, will ascend into heaven to defend the interests of his brothers, all men. Christ is our envoy in heaven, where he lives in constant intercession for us.

V. MGR BOUGAUD

(Bishop of Laval. He published in Orleans, in 1884, a treatise called *The Christian and the Present Tinies.* The following is a summary of his thought concerning confession.)

1. *A divine institution:*

Had we been angels our worship would have been reduced to prayer and sacrifice; but since we are sinful men we need purification, to which all religions have had recourse, with different rites.

On one occasion a discussion was being held in the presence of Chateaubriand concerning the authenticity of a writing attributed to Napoleon. The writer's comment was: There can be no doubt; the lion's claw is clearly revealed. Genius always leaves its mark; and here, in this sacrament, one can see that of God.

2. *The need for divine power to institute it:*

It would seem that Christ could not undertake a more difficult task than that of placing a man in the position of infallible ruler over the whole world; yet today we still sing 'Tu es Petrus'. On creating the Papacy God placed in the world an incomparable monument to his divinity.

Still, there was even greater difficulty involved in creating the sacrament of penance, for which it was necessary to create the penitent, breaking his pride and that glacial silence in which we all know how to wrap our crimes, and say to him: 'Go on your knees.' The confessor also had to be created.

(a) The penitent:

Christ ordered that all should go to confession, rich and poor, princes, popes and faithful. All must say: Father, I have sinned! What is more, they must confess everything, even the most secret and humiliating things.

(b) The confessor:

An even more delicate task, this. He must be formed to his task, reducing to nothing that human heart, at once so beautiful and so

horrible, that heart which either does not love at all or loves too much, substituting for it in a mere human vessel those virtues which are not human.

The confessor must be gifted with a love which will not be fatigued by sins, weaknesses or the repetition of crimes ... what is more, it must be a love which is universal, embracing saint and sinner, ruler and prisoner. It must be a love without reward; ice rather than fire. . . . Add to this the gift of discretion and that of secrecy and this not in one but in millions of confessors and you will see what was demanded to make confession possible.

3. *Its effects:*

There can be seen in Avignon a magnificent crucifix. The artist tried to reproduce all the anguish *of* Christ's death and also the hope of the resurrection. To achieve this he carved his work in such a way that, if you look at the figure from one side you see Christ in agony, while on the other side there is a resplendent Christ. The front view gives such a combination of the two that you can see a God who is dying but who will rise again.

In our religion there is no single dogma which does not affect the wounds in the soul and cure them without scruple. This happens in a special way in confession, which is destined to wipe away sin and which reveals the same two facets, one sorrowful and one radiant. One approaches it with fear and one comes away transfigured.

(a) It frees the soul from the slavery *of sin:*

This is the sorrowful part. So that the soul may be free from sin it is necessary that it force the sin out by means of a freely made confession . . . while the poison is not eliminated there is no hope of a cure. Punishment applied from without is not enough. This is why mothers make sure that their children confess their faults, and it is the reason why the civil codes usually consider confession an attenuating circumstance. The relief of such a confession is so great that many criminals are not happy until they have denounced themselves. This is just what Christ did. Confession was a human thing and he made it divine.

The intimate structure of confession confirms what has just been said. All sin is made up of three things: pride of someone who does not wish to submit to the law; rebellion when pride and pleasure are opposed to each other; concupiscence which inclines us to pleasure. The three find their cure in that act of humility by which the penitent admits that he is a sinner, in the sacrifice involved in confessing his sin and in the submission with which he accepts the penance.

(b) Confession transfigures the soul:

First through consolation. Men need it; Christ himself complained that he did not find it (Isaias 63. 5). But the comfort we usually seek

from our friends is more an unburdening of pride than the true satisfaction which God has provided for us by bringing peace to us through confession. Apart from this comfort there is the special light which the Church spreads to all souls first of all by public preaching and then, in a very intimate way to each soul, by the special advice given to each penitent, accompanied by the grace of God.

There is the light of pardon and peace. No matter how much fortune may smile on us, if the conscience remains wounded then man is miserable. Here we see clearly the two facets of confession which were mentioned above.

SECTION VI. PAPAL TEXTS

(In this section λνε shall limit ourselves to a summary of the five points on which true peace in the world can be built up. These were developed by Pope Pius XII in the Christmas message broadcast in 1942.)

1. Whoever wishes to see the star of peace appear and come to rest over society, let him contribute his share by giving back to the human person that dignity which God granted him from the beginning. Let him oppose the excessive agglomeration of men, almost as if they were a mass without a soul; all economic, social, political, intellectual and moral inconstancy; let him fight the lack of solid principles and profound convictions. Let him favour by all the legitimate means in his power those forms of social life which make possible and guarantee full personal responsibility, both in the earthly and the heavenly spheres.

2. Let him give his support to the practical realization of the following fundamental rights of the human person: the right to maintain and develop bodily, intellectual and moral life, especially the right to a religious formation and education; the right to private and public worship of God; the right in principle to marry and to achieve its due end; the right to conjugal and domestic society; the right to work as an indispensable means to the maintainance of family life; the right to a free choice of one's state of life, and therefore to choose the priestly or religious states; the right to the use of material goods, with full knowledge of one's duties and social limitations.

3. He who wishes to see the star of peace come to rest on society, must reject all forms of materialism, which sees nothing in the people save a flock of individuals who, divided and inconstant, are considered an object of dominion and submission. Let him think of society as an internal unity, for ever growing and cherished under

the guidance of Providence; a unity which, in the space assigned to it and under its special conditions, tends towards the collaboration of the different classes and professions to the eternal and yet ever new ends of civilization and religion.

4. Let him defend the indissolubility of marriage; let him grant to the family, that indispensable cell of the people, light, space and tranquillity, that it may fulfil its mission ofengendering and educating children in a spirit which is in agreement with the true and proper religious convictions. According to his powers let him presene, fortify and renew its especial unity, from the economic, spiritual, moral and juridical aspects. Let him take care that servants also share in the material and spiritual advantages of the family. Let him take care to provide for the family a home in which the family life, materially and morally sound, can develop with its full force and vigour. Let him make sure that the places of work and the homes are not so far apart that the head of the family and the educator of the children may not be as it were a stranger in his own home. Above all let him make sure that between the schools and the family there should be that bond of confidence and mutual collaboration which in former times produced such rich fruit, but which at the present day has been replaced by lack of confidence wherever the school, under the influence of a materialistic spirit, poisons and destroys all that the parents have sown in the minds of their children.

5.. . . Let him give to labour the place destined for it by God from the beginning. As an indispensable means to achieve the conquering of the world, desired by God for his greater glory, all labour possesses an inalienable dignity and, at the same time, an intimate relationship with the development of the personality. What a noble dignity and prerogative is this of labour, in no way vilified by the weight and fatigue which it has to bear as an effect of original sin, through obedience and submission to the will of God.

6. He who knows the great encyclicals of our predecessors and our own statements will not be ignorant of the fact that the Church does not hesitate to mention those practical consequences which are derived from the moral dignity' of labour. She supports them with all the power of her authority. These demands include, apart from a just wage, sufficient for the needs of the worker and his family, the conservation and perfection of a social order which will make possible a secure, if modest, private ownership for all social classes; which will favour a higher grade of preparation for the children of the working class who have special gifts of intelligence and good will. It will foment in the towns, villages and cities and in the whole nation that practical realization of the social spirit which, by smoothing away the different interests of the classes, takes away from the

worker the feeling of isolation and gives him the consoling experience of a genuine and Christian solidarity which is truly fraternal.

(The Holy Father then goes on to point out that there must be mutual aid between labour and capital, a laying aside of egoism and nationalism. All must co-operate to bring about a new social order which is founded on God's supreme dominion. This is man's only real security and the basis for true social and national peace.)

SECTION VII. HISTORICAL AND LITERARY NOTES

A: A Hebrew salutation

There are in the Scriptures many passages which reveal a growing anxiety and desire for peace. This became a current salutation among the Hebrews. God salutes Gideon: Be at peace, and have no fear (Judges 6. 23). Peace be with you, said the angel to Tobias (Tob. 12. 17). David's messengers salute Nabal: Peace be to thy house, thy kinsmen and all that is thine (1 Kings 25. 6), and there are many other expressions such as Go in peace, which we can find for example in Judith. All these are also to be found in the New Testament; thus Christ tells his disciples that they are to wish well to all in whose house they enter: Peace be to this house. He uses the phrase, as we have seen, in his appearances to his disciples (Luke 24. 36), and also during his life, to sinners: Thy faith hath made thee whole, go in peace (Luke 7. 50; 8. 48).

This Christian salutation was taken up especially by St Paul, in whose writings it abounds. Grace and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 1. 7). So may the peace of God, which surpasses all our thinking, watch over your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4. 7). So may the peace of Christ, the very condition of your calling as members of a single body, reign in your hearts (Coloss. 3. 15).

The christological meaning is even clearer in the formula Peace be to you, which Christ used after his resurrection and which has become part of the Roman Liturgy, being the salutation of the Bishop before the collect. In the Eastern liturgies from the fourth century this formula takes the place of our *Dominus vobiscum* (with the exception of the Egyptian rite). It is interesting to notice that it was reserved for those occasions on which the *Gloria* was said or sung—thus bringing the peace of Christ after the angelic salutation, Peace to men of good will.

B: A passage from St Teresa

Almost invariably the Lord showed himself to me in his risen body and it was thus, too, that I saw him in the Host. Only on

occasions, to strengthen me when I was in distress, did he show me his wounds, and then he would appear, sometimes as he was on the Cross and sometimes as he was in the garden. On a few occisions I saw him wearing the crown of thorns and sometimes he would also be carrying the Cross—because of my needs, as I say, and those of others—but always in his glorified flesh....

Once when I was holding in my hand the cross of a rosary, he put out his own hand and took it from me, and, when he gave it back to me, it had become four large stones, much more precious than diamonds—incomparably more so ... on the cross, with marvellous workmanship were portrayed the five wounds. He told me that from henceforth it would always look like that to me, and so it did . . . (*The Life,* Chap. 29).

O Jesus Christ, Son of the Eternal Father, our Lord, true King over all things! What didst thou leave in the world for thy descendants to inherit? What didst thou ever have, my Lord, save trials, pains and insults? Indeed thou hadst only a beam of wood to rest upon while drinking the bitter draught of death. Those of us, then, my God, who desire to be thy true children and not to renounce their inheritance, must never flee from suffering. Thy crest is five wounds. So, my children, let that too be our device if we are to inherit his kingdom. Not by ease nor by comfort nor by honour nor by wealth can we gain that which he purchased for us with so much blood ... (*Foundations,* Chap. 10).

C: Confesssion

Jesus obliged us to confess our sins for our own sake rather than for his. He took the institution of Confession, which is a natural necessity and safeguard, facilitated and elevated it, raising it to the dignity of a Sacrament. He made the inevitably difficult task of confessing as easy as it possibly could be made. We confess in secret, to any priest we choose; if we like, to one who does not know us and will probably never see us again. We confess in secret to a man who is trained, not merely to listen with tenderness and sympathy, but to instruct, advise and heal.

In the Sacrament of Penance Christ himself is the real priest. There, in his capacity of Divine Physician, he forgives sin, pours grace into our souls, removes the traces of past sins, and gives us a title to actual graces in future difficulties.

Confession is simply a Hospital of souls, where the Good Samaritan, through the instrumentality of priests, goes about binding up wounds and pouring in oil and wine: a hospital where the Divine Physician displays his healing art. Object to such a sacrament as too fantastically good to be true, but please don't object to it as a bugbear. (From *Pardon and Peace,* by Alfred Wilson, C.P. n. o. Sheed and Ward, 1948.)

SECTION VIH. SERMON SCHEMES

I. LITURGICAL

Children, new-born

Become like children

1. Frequently the Liturgy presents the supernatural to us in the guise of the natural.

(a) The expressions used in the blessing of the font on Easter Saturday, with such terms as Immaculate womb, give birth, etc.

(b) The same principle covers the words of today's Introit: You are children, new-born . . . (1 Pet. 2. 2).

i. During the eight days of paschal time the newly baptized assisted at all the functions dressed as children in their white robes.

ii. Today marked the beginning of their adult status in the Church.

iii. The Church sums up all the recommendations she has given them in this command, live like new-born children.

2. The command has a foundation in the Gospels, in words of Christ himself, Believe me, unless you become like little children again you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 18. 3). He is greatest in the kingdom who will abase himself like this little child *(ibid.* 4).

Spiritual childhood

1. Pope Pius XI said of St Thérèse: She has shown herself to us as a master of the science of spiritual childhood. This does not mean that she discovered this road to perfection, already laid down in the Gospels and preached by the Liturgy.

2. However, the Carmelite of Lisieux taught us to practise it and for her it was the most effective and rapid means to reach perfection. From her teaching we shall take the most important extracts which give the chief characteristics of this road to perfection presented to us in today's liturgy.

Characteristics of spiritual childhood

Keeping in mind the special psychology of children and following the writings of St Thérèse, we may indicate as characteristics of this spiritual childhood: the love for our Father, confidence in him and humility.

1. *Love for the Father:*

(a) A child loves his parents blindly, with an affection which is disinterested and which requires no thought. Fie needs to love them.

Spiritual childhood means handing ourselves over to God without calculation or reflection. The soul cannot live without loving God, in whom it finds the charm and tenderness of the best of parents.

(b) This is how Thérèse loved God—as a child caressing its father. This love is so true that it gives way to all the demands of God. For this reason we find in Thérèse a victim of love.

(c) It is not a love which is content to remain inactive or weak. As God gave his life as sacrificial victim so he demands from the soul the same sacrifices. W hatever it may cost, she said, I desire to gain the palm of Agnes, if not by blood at least by love.

2. *Confidence:*

(a) An undeniable characteristic of childhood: the child feels complete security when it is with its father. 'To guide his little boat the only thing necessary for the child is to abandon himself and allow the sails to be filled according to the caprice of the wind.'

(b) All roads to perfection must possess this characteristic, but in this one of spiritual childhood it predominates, as did penance in that of the hermits. Thérèse made this abandonment in complete confidence the main spring of her Way.

3. *Humility:*

(a) As the saint says, this is necessary in order to be a child in the spiritual life: 'To be little means not to attribute to oneself any virtue, judging oneself to be capable of anything; rather we should realize that God puts this treasure into the hands of his daughter that she may use it when she wills ; but it is always God's treasure. ... It consists in not being discouraged by one's own faults; children fall frequently, but they are too small to do themselves much harm.

(b) Many souls, through a desire to examine their consciences constantly, become discouraged and fall into despair. The saint, however, recognizes her own weakness, loves it and makes of it a way to lead her to God.

i. Nothing surprises me any more; nor am I discouraged at my own weakness. On the contrary, I glory in it and resign myself to the daily discovery of new imperfections. I admit that this light which is thrown on my own nothingness is worth more to me than if it were shed on the faith.

ii. What matter if I fall at every moment! Thus I recognize my own weakness, from which I obtain great good. My God, you see how little I can do unless you carry me in your arms!

(c) From all this we can see that the way of spiritual childhood is one of optimism and joy in the midst of our weakness.

A woman's way ?

St Thérèse is often thought of as a typically' feminine saint; and therefore her Way is considered more fitting for women then for

men. This is a great mistake. A careful study of her life (especially that written by Van der Mecrsch) will remove this idea, because then we see her as she really was, not sentimental and silly, but strong and manly in her struggles. As Pius XI said: she teaches us a childlike simplicity which has nothing childlike about it except the name.

1.The childhood she teaches is one which is a simple abandonment in confidence, relying on God absolutely; not a spirit of self-seeking, of constant looking for spiritual consolations, visions of angels and the perfume of roses. Even though some of the phrases she uses may seem infantile and feminine, the actual doctrine, when put into practice, needs renunciation of self, sacrifice, disinterestedness. The 'Let him deny himself' of the Gospel enters fully into this Way of perfection.

2. To see in everything the hand of God, to think of things and events in the light of this faith, to submit oneself to one's superiors, to renounce one's own likes and caprices—these are the demands of spiritual childhood—and there is nothing weak or feminine about them. This is a road which all can follow.

IL THE EPISTLE

Victory of faith over the world

1. *A danger0l1s error:*

(a) St John, in the opening verses of this chapter, speaks to us of faith and love; of faith on fire with the love of God and neighbour, proper to those who have been born again.

i. This faith has overcome the world—John considers the first steps of the infant Church as an accomplished victory, since they contain the power necessary to lead the Church to her final victory.

ii. In his writings the 'world' means the forces of evil which are opposed to Christ; yet in verse 4 the sense is somewhat wider, signifying the whole earth, under the dominion of worldly powers, and also overcome by faith.

(b) We may fall into the error of preaching about the world in a purely negative way; showing up its vices and applying ourselves to an asceticism of renunciation.

i. The doctrine may be sound, but it is generally not capable of stirring up much enthusiasm or spirit of combat in our hearers.

ii. The victory over the world must consist in transforming it, making use of the energy we find in it and directing that force to other purposes.

iii. To try to enclose the world in a convent is a tactical error

which limits the apostolate to a small group—and may lead to pride.

iv. Fhe real idea should be to convert a world which is earthly into one which is holy.

2. *The Church of old and that of today:*

(a) .Am example of this policy was the triumph of the Church:

i. The reform of customs introduced by the early Church is regarded as a moral miracle; however, it would be an error to think of the Church as she was in the time of Diocletian as a collection of monks. It is enough to remind ourselves how hard it was for the Christians not to frequent the baths in time of persecution.

ii. Society retained its general outline, the virtues were substituted for the vices.

(b) Today we are in a similar situation:

i. *The world and Christ have opposing ideas.* We must overcome the world. To attempt this by distorting human nature, insisting that on the one hand some should give up their legitimate aspirations to better their condition, while others should surrender their temporal well-being which they have obtained through modem culture, is an impossibility. That would mean not a transformation of the world but an annihilation of it.

ii. *We must penetrate the world.* We must live its problems in order to find a Christian solution to them. When St Peter and Paul were instructing widows and virgins, slaves and masters, they did it in this way—leaving it to the individual to apply the teaching to his own particular state of life.

(c) We find ourselves confronted with opposed ideals:

Very deeply felt on both sides; but on the side of the world we may note that the ideals have also at their service an ideology and enthusiasm which is sometimes wanting on our side.

3. *The faith—together with charity—the arms for victory:*

(a) St John, from the human point of view, was in a worse state than we are:

i. Fewer collaborators, with less culture and fewer means.

ii. Nevertheless, he tells us what his weapons were; faith and love—a double love, for God and the neighbour.

(b) Whatever takes its origin from God must needs triumph over the world:

Our faith, that is the triumphant principle which triumphs over the world (1 John 5· 4)· He alone triumphs over the world who believes that Jesus is the Son of God *{ibid.* v. 5). Therefore we need to believe in:

(c) The doctrine of Jesus: without any exception; both in theory and practice:

i. Because when the apostle hears the words 'Blessed are the poor' and then enjoys dealing only with the rich he is not believeing in the doctrine of Christ.

ii. If on hearing that Blessed are the meek, the merciful, he grows weary of not being understood and abandons the people to God's punishments he does not believe as he should.

iii. The same can be said of him if he does not listen to Christ when he warns us of persecutions to come or tells us to love our enemies, do good to those who hate us, pray for those who persecute and calumniate us.

(d) The divinity of Jesus, with infinite power at his disposition:

And also at the disposition of those who are his apostles.

(e) Also love:

Which is a natural result of our belief if we are truly alive in Christ. The end of chapter 4 and the first verses of chapter 5 are full of this idea. He who loves God dares all things. He who loves his neighbour for and in God is capable of keeping the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount.

(f) Only thus, by means of this double love, shall we be able to enter into the world and sanctify it: we shall not stifle the just aspirations of the poor, nor the exercise of their rights. The world will not become a convent but a Christian dwelling place.

4. *The secret of success*

If Christ could find numerous apostles whose faith and charity are as we have described, he would surely grant them the victory. We should do our best to dedicate our lives to him in this fashion.

III. THE GOSPEL

A: The Peace of Christ

Introduction

1. The first words which come to our Lord's lips when he makes his first official visit to the Church, united together in the Upper Room, are: peace be to you.

2. These w'ords are not to be reduced to the category of a mere salutation. The history of the word 'Peace' in the life of Christ is worth attention from this point of view.

3. It was prophesied of him that he would be the Prince of peace. All the messianic prophecies lay great stress on the fact that the age

of the Messias will be one which abounds in peace and plenty. (Cf. Mich. 4 and 5.)

4. This theme was preached constantly:

(a) The angels celebrated the birth of the Messias with a hymn of peace to men of good will. (Cf. St Thomas, p. 464.)

(b) He sends his apostles as ambassadors of peace in a trial apostolate. (Cf. Mt. 10. 12.)

(c) Among the Beatitudes which form part of the Sermon on the Mount and which contain the summary of the perfect doctrine of the Messias, we find that the peacemakers are called the sons of God.

(d) It is a constant theme in St Paul. (Cf. Rom. 15. 33; 16.20; i Cor. 14. 33; 2 Thes. 3. 16; Eph. 2. 14, etc.)

Peace a fruit of the Passion (cf. Bossuet, p. 476):

1. *Our Lord's farewell:*

As Calvary drew near his final words are a promise of peace:

(a) Peace is my bequest to you, and the peace which I give you is mine to give; I do not give peace as the world gives it. Do not let your heart be distressed or play the coward (John 14. 27).

(b) Christ carries the cross as representative of the whole race, an embassy of peace between the world and God.

2. That is why, on rising again after the grim battle of death, he appears to his disciples and salutes them with an expression which indicates that his action has had fruitful results: Peace be to you.

3. Immediately he shows them the wounds in his hands, feet and side, as a demonstration of the price which this peace has cost him personally.

Peace for the world—the gift which comes from the resurrection:

1. Jesus, in this apparition, gives to his disciples as first-fruits of the peace which has been obtained, the power to forgive sins, a power which has no limits, either with regard to sin or to man himself.

2. This indicates that in the forgiveness of sins and the new life of grace merited by Christ in his sacrifice lies the root of all true peace. In them is:

(a) The peace of God:

i. Christ eliminated the enmity between us.

ii. Announced peace to all, because through him we have the power to approach the Father through the Holy Ghost (Eph. 2. 16-18; Rom. 5. 8-11).

iii. In Christ; sins have been forgiven; the first grace has been given; an increase of the spiritual life is given and the bonds of peace are strengthened.

(b) At peace with our neighbours:

i. Living in Christ the law of brotherly love is practised—not merely do we keep the law of justice but also that of charity.

ii. Injuries are pardoned, and life itself is offered in heroic sacrifice for the neighbour.

iii. This is the New Commandment which Christ preached at the Last Supper, when he was on the point of signing with his blood the last will and testament of his doctrine.

(c) Peace with ourselves:

i. Consists in the obedience of the passions to the dictates of reason, and of reason to the supernatural life, illuminated by faith.

ii. This right order of things was broken by sin and restored through the merits of Christ, applied to us through grace.

(d) St Augustine has left us a summary of the fruits of peace:

i. *In the body*: it orders all the members among themselves.

ii. *In the rational soul*: it is the harmony between all the appetites, and reason, will and action.

iii. Between God and man it establishes perfect submission through faith and eternal law.

iv. In the home it brings about perfect concord between those who rule and those whose duty it is to obey.

v. In the city it establishes concord between the citizens themselves and between them and the authorities.

vi. The peace of heaven is the perfect enjoyment of God and of each other in God.

vii. Wherever it is to be found, peace means that tranquillity which derives from perfect order, in which each thing occupies its right place.

B : The wounds of Christ

The wounds are kept by Christ

Christ presented himself to the apostles after the resurrection, showing them his wounds. The fact that they remained in his glorified body has an explanation. Following St Thomas we can give the reasons as follows:

The trophies of victory

i *Because they are glorious wounds:*

(a) As St Bede says: Christ went to the fight in order to do the will of the Father.

(b) To defend and save the world.

(c) It was a hard struggle—the hardest of all—but he defeated the enemy, although he had to receive these wounds in order to do it.

(d) The scars of wounds thus received are more glorious than a dy which has not received them and is thus without any sign of battle.

2. Because of the fruits which have been achieved through these wounds from which has come more glory' than blood; Christ did not fight through vain glory, but for our love, in obedience, to achieve our redemption.

The confirmation of our faith

1. These wounds are a firm argument for the resurrection of Jesus.

(a) For this reason Christ showed them to the disciples after the resurrection.

(b) Thomas also asks to see and touch the wounds in order to be certain of the fact that Christ has risen.

(c) Christ offers to Thomas the opportunity' to see and touch them as a proof of the reality of his resurrection.

(d) St Gregory says: The unbelief of Thomas was of more value to us than the faith of the other Apostles who already believed, because since he was forced to believe through handling the wounds, our minds, casting aside all doubt, are confirmed in their faith.

2. They confirm our faith in our own resurrection. Since he has promised that he is the first fruits of those who sleep—that we shall one day rise with him.

An eternal reminder

i. They are constantly presented to the Father to placate his just anger.

(a) For this reason St John says:... if any of us does fall into sin, we have an advocate to plead our cause before the Father in the Just One, Jesus Christ. He, in his own person, is the atonement made for our sins, and not only for ours, but for the sins of the whole world (i John 2. 1-2).

(b) The Father, contemplating the wounds of his Son, will never forget the eternal reconcilation with us which has been the effect of the merits of Christ. These wounds plead for mercy more strongly than our sins clamour for justice.

2. Through them Christ demonstrates for all time the fact that he will be ever solicitous on behalf of those whom he has redeemed; In him there is a perfect fulfilment of those words of Isaias: I will not be forgetful of thee; why, I have cut thy image on the palms of my hands (Isaias 49. 16).

3. *They remind us:*

(a) of the love of Christ for us. We see in them that we have been redeemed at a great price, bought with the blood of Christ. The greatest proof of his love is that he has given his life for us;

(b) of our sins: the causes of these wounds;

(c) the honour and reverence due to these wounds on our part.

Tenor of the damned; joy of the blessed

1. *The damned:*

St Augustine says that, on the last day, Christ will appear before the damned and say to them: Behold the man whom you have crucified, see the wounds which you have made, recognize the side which you have pierced, which was opened for you and yet you have not chosen to enter into it.

2. *The joy of the blessed:*

At the sight of these wounds the just may well sing: Power and Godhead, wisdom and strength, honour and glory, and blessing are his by right, the Lamb that was slain (Apoc. 5. 12).

C: Jesus and unbelievers

Introduction

In the Gospel of today we shall examine three classes of unbelief and the way our Lord dealt with them.

i. The weak

1. Some of the apostles believed that Christ had risen, but others did not.

(a) John believed what Magdalen had told them when he saw the empty tomb.

(b) Peter, on the other hand, was amazed (Luke 24. 12).

(c) When the other apostles received the news from the women they considered that they were mad (Luke 24. 11).

(d) The disciples on the way to Emmaus had hoped that Christ would redeem the world—they had hoped, now they did not (Luke 24. 21).

2. *Their unbelief was not total:*

(a) The very same disciples of Emmaus, who were the most pessimistic, thought that Jesus was a great prophet, sent by God to the people to teach them and save them (Luke 24. 19).

(b) From the data given us in the Gospels we can conclude:

i. *that their incredulity was culpable.* Because the Saviour had given them abundant proof of his divinity and had announced to them his death and resurrection.

ii. *but it vas not gravely so.* Because they had not yet realized what the Scripture teaching implied (John 20. 9). This St John admits in his own case before the tomb.

iii. It is impossible to doubt that they thought often of Jesus and loved him. There they are, all united in that very place where they had supped with him for the last time; there we see their joy when they know that he is risen.

iii. But the apparent failure of the passion and the unheard of rising from the dead impede their belief.

3. *fl hat is the cause of their state of mind?*

(a) The principal cause:

That of not having understood the mystery of the redemption, because they were too closely attached to the purely human interpretation of the rôle of Messias. We may say that it was a certain lack of spiritual criterion and a way of thinking which was too materialistic and human.

i. This is obvious in their quarrel during the last journey to Jerusalem—they were still disputing the first places in the kingdom.

ii. On Holy Tuesday they' ask for the signs of his coming in a visible kingdom (Matt. 24. 3).

iii. When the disciples from Emmaus say that they had hoped that he would redeem Israel they were thinking on the same lines.

(b) Sadness:

i. The lack of a supernatural way of thinking produces sadness in time of failure. What must they have been like since the traveller on the way to Emmaus noticed it at once ?

ii. The death of someone they loved, especially a death inflicted by the authorities; their crime and that of the Chosen People, the sudden dashing to the ground of all their hopes and illusions—all these contributed to produce sadness and despair.

(c) Fear—what is now going to happen to them?

(d) Thus, natural criteria instead of supernatural, fear and sadness constitute one complex cause the result of which is their refusal to believe the facts.

4. *Jesus and his Apostles:*

(a) We have seen that the apostles fall into that class of unbeliever who wish to have faith but cannot bring themselves to make that act on the evidence provided.

(b) What is the conduct of Jesus towards them ?

He searches them out on the way to Emmaus and in the Cenacle.

i. He convinces them by showing them the wounds, allowing them to touch him, eating with them.

ii. He completes their instruction by reminding them of his words and of the prophecies concerning him—he opens their eyes.

iii. He brings them peace.

(c) Once they are convinced he forgets their hardness of heart, which he has only remembered in order to remove it. He gives them back their old familiarity with him, associates them with his redeeming mission, sends them the Holy Spirit so that they can forgive sins.

2. The unbelief of the obstinate

1. *Thomas represents these:*

(a) The motives for belief are more than sufficient—apart from the women, Jesus has been seen by eleven other people.

(b) But Thomas does not pay any heed to the witnesses, he demands a personal and physical experience. Thus he offends God:

i. By imposing on him conditions.

ii. He offends his companions, whom he treats as mad or at least hallucinated.

iii. It would seem that he deserved to be left alone by the Master, or even rejected by him.

2. *Jesus and Thomas:*

(a) He looks for Thomas deliberately:

i. He submits to his demands.

ii. He rebukes his hardness of heart and makes him see that he will have less reward.

iii. To sum up—he is just, but he is also the good Shepherd who goes in search of the lost sheep, using those means which he deems best in the circumstances.

(b) Thomas, hard of heart at the beginning, is afterwards he who most generously professes the faith, giving us a testimony to the fact of the resurrection which it is impossible to deny.

3. The incredulity of the hard of heart

The chief priests are a typical example of these. But even then we must distinguish, because they were not all alike in their guilt.

1. There was the mass of the priestly class, at once pastors of a sort and also led by their chiefs.

2. The chief priests, proud and perverse.

(a) Jesus does not reject any of them—he waits and hopes. When the apostles begin their preaching in Jerusalem many of the first class will be converted—they were not all bad.

(b) Only at the end of his life, when the second class demonstrate their real hardness of heart, comes the punishment; then he does threaten them, because his divine knowledge told him the state of their souls.

The unbeliever and ourselves

i. How hard we are at times with them!

(a) Perhaps occasionally we have a few words of pity for the great mass of the working class, whose individuals we afterwards seem to blame too easily.

(b) Our displeasure also extends itself to the more intelligent, who have motives for believing.

(c) And also the same is true of the leaders of the people—we never find any excuse for them.

2. The conduct of the Lord is very different from this.

(a) The Church never imposes on the pagan the obligation of being converted, because we can never know if the motives of credibility' have been proposed in a way which is subjectively sufficient to lead to belief.

(b) How many prejudices there are—and it is hard for us to realize what a great influence this has.

3. Let us have pity' on them; go to them; talk to them in a language they will understand. Let them see our interest in them at least.

(a) If Thomas was hard to convince, are not we often the same, both in natural and supernatural things?

(b) At times we shall find that, in spite of their obstinacy, they really wanted to believe all the time and could not find the way to do so.

4. In so far as the hard-hearted are concerned, Jesus could condemn them because he knew that they would always be impenitent. But what do we know about them?

(a) If we had seen Saul minding the clothes of those who stoned Stephen we would have cursed him as a persecutor of the Church. Would we have seen the future St Paul in that man?

(b) Above all the Christian must have charity. He should both preach and practise it. If we do not wish to give scandal in this matter we must begin to practise it with the weakest of all our enemies, that is the unbeliever.

D: The Mission of the Apostles

The apostles and Christ

i. Christ takes advantage of his first appearance to the Apostolic College to treat of an affair which is of the greatest importance for the Church and for all men. These were not merely friends of the Master; they had to receive a mission, the same mission as that of Christ himself. Christ would be ever present to the world through his disciples. Neither the words nor the life of Christ, not his merits or his passion would pass away; all would exist for ever

(a) This identity of mission appears already at the last supper. Christ speaks to thc Father about his disciples and says: I have given them thc message which thou gavest to me, and they, receiving it, recognized it for truth that I came from thee ... I have given them thy message, and the world has nothing but hatred for them, because they do not belong to the world, as I, too, do not belong to the world . . . thou hast sent me into the world on thy errand, and I have sent them into the world on my errand (John 17.8,14,18).

(b) He says the same thing to them on this occasion: I came upon an errand from my Father, and now I am sending you out in my turn . . . (John 20. 21). This identity of mission is stressed many times in the Gospel, because Christ says to them: He who listens to you listens to me: he who despises you despises me; and he who despises me, despises him that sent me (Luke 10. 16).

The same authority

The formula Jesus uses is of extraordinary power: he says: All authority in heaven and on earth ... has been given to me (Matt. 28. 18). The apostles will preach and administer the sacraments with that same divine authority by which Christ came into this world (cf. St John Eudes).

The same powers

1. It can be reduced to a triple power, the primary law and constitution of the Church as Pius XII calls it in *Mystici Corporis.*

2. *Christ:*

(a) Sent as king by his Father

He established his Church as a kingdom, which the apostles were to rule (Matt. 16. 18-19).

(b) Sent as teacher by his Father

Christ institutes an authentic *magisterium,* perpetual and infallible, within his Church. The apostles are the teachers in his stead. (Cf. Mark 3. 14; 16. 15.)

(c) As supreme High Priest

He grants to the Church this same priesthood for the sanctification and salvation of souls. This grace all priests communicate by means of the sacraments. (Cf. John 3.5; Luke 22.19; 1 Cor. 1. 24; John 20. 22, etc.)

The same end in view

i. This is nothing but the creation of the reign of God in souls, as we can see from the summary of Christ's preaching: From that time onwards Jesus began to preach ; Repent, he said, the kingdom of God is at hand (Matt. 4. 17).

2. He tells his disciples to do the same on the occasion of their first preaching mission. (Cf. Matt. io. 5-7.)

Conclusion

The doctrine can be summed up in these words of Pius XI: The priest is a minister of Christ, an instrument, that is to say, in the hands of the Divine Redeemer. He continues the work of redemption in all its world-embracing universality and divine efficacy, that work which wrought such a marvellous transformation in the world. Thus the priest is said with good reason to be 'Another Christ', for in some way he is himself a continuation of Christ. As the Father hath sent me, I also send you, is spoken to the priest, and hence the priest, like Christ, continues to give 'Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, to men of good will' (Encycl. *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii).*

E: The Apostolate of the laity

An obligation for every believer

1. In the Gospel of today Christ gives the official mission of the apostolate to those in the upper room. But apart from the priests and bishops, there have always been in the Church lay apostles who have worked for Christ in some form or another.

2. In the Gospels we find the numerous disciples who prepared the way for the Lord (cf. v.g. Luke 10), while St Paul makes reference to those who collaborated with him (Phil. 4. 3).

3. If we understand the apostolate in its wide sense of spreading the reign of Christ, it belongs to every Christian to take his part in it. It is of obligation for many reasons.

A precept of the Church

i. Through the ages the Church has always stressed this obligation:

(a) St John Chrysostom says:

Among your duties is that of contributing to the salvation of your brethren, leading them to the priests in spite of their laments, cries and protestations.

(b) St Thomas says:

When the faith is in danger everyone is obliged to spread it among others, either by instructing and confirming them in it, or by reproving them and arresting the attacks of the enemy (2-2. q. 3 *a.* 2 *ad 2um).*

(c) The Popes have frequently spoken their minds on this matter:

For example, Pius XI says: To do nothing is a sin of omission which may well prove to be a grave one. While Pius XII says: This

is not enough nowadays; all the faithful of good-will should awake from their lethargy and feel that part of the responsibility which is theirs in the success of this work of salvation.

2. This precept is frequently forgotten and there are many who think that it obliges only a small and select group within the Church. Each should do what lies in his power, but the obligation is universal.

Charity towards God demands it

1. Charity towards God demands that we seek and will his glory. Now the external glory of God consists in his being known, loved and served by his creatures. Therefore, in the measure in which we contribute towards extending that knowledge, love and service of God, we extend his external glory.

2. This same love for God implies that we wish what he wills, and the will of God is that all men to come to the knowledge of him and thus to salvation (i Tim. 2. 4).

3. The same thing is true of our love for Christ, since he came that all may have life and may have it more abundantly (John 10. 10). To help in this mission it is necessary for us to make up, in our flesh, what is wanting to the passion of Christ (Col. 1. 24).

4. Therefore the apostolate of Catholic Action is necessary as an act of gratitude to Christ for all his favours. Thus we further the designs of his Sacred Heart.

F: Confession

Its necessity

1. We have to tell our sins to a priest, who acts as judge in the place of Christ. We accuse ourselves, so that God may not accuse us at the last day.

2. Christ instituted confession as a judgement and therefore the priest must know the cause which he is judging. Since this cause is an interior one he can only know it if we ourselves reveal it clearly and fully to him.

Qualities of good confession (cf. St Thomas *supra)*

1. *Sorrowful:*
We must be sorry for our sins, with a firm purpose of amendment.

2. *Complete:*
All mortal sins committed since baptism and not yet confessed, together with the number of times and the circumstances which change the nature of the sin. We are not bound to confess venial

sins, because there are other ways of ridding ourselves of their guilt, However, it is most useful to confess them.

3. *Sincere:*

We must tell the truth—and nothing but the truth.

4. *Humble:*

We are there to accuse ourselves, not to offer excuses.

5. *Brief:*

Sins have a name, and it is enough to give them that name, without unnecessary details.

6. *Charitable:*

We are there to tell our own sins, not those of others.

Shame

1. Confession is difficult. There is, in us, an inner sense of shame which often spoils the sincerity of our confessions. We must learn to overcome it by reminding ourselves that a sick person dare not have any shame about his illness in front of the doctor if he really desires to be cured.

2. The good effects of confession are so great that the thought of them should overcome our natural shame.

3. Nevertheless, at times shame does spoil our confessions by leading us to hide certain faults, gloss over them, confess them in an ambiguous way, diminish their number, etc. We should remind ourselves that:

(a) this lack of sincerity probably means that the sins are not forgiven;

(b) the longer we put it off the worse it will be;

(c) here is always the danger of final impenitence;

(d) the root cause is lack of faith and confidence. We are accusing ourselves to a God who is mercy itself and who came to seek sinners. There is no sin which cannot be forgiven in this life;

(e) St Augustine says: What can I hide in my heart which can remain hidden from thy eyes, even though I may wish to conceal it or not desire to confess it? The only thing I achieve by that is that you hide yourself from me, not I from thee.

4. The difficulties we have in confessing are often more imaginary than real.

(a) There is no fear that our sins may ever be revealed:
The priest is bound by most rigid rules to observe secrecy.

(b) He will never be surprised at what we have to tell him:
He knows human nature too well for that.

(c) Our sins arc not too great to be forgiven:
That is a delusion, and at times a secret form of pride.

(d) We are not ashamed to commit them:
We should not be ashamed to confess them.

Examination of conscience

The means are at our disposal for knowing our sins. It must therefore be diligent and sincere without being scrupulous. It must be done in a human fashion—wre are not expected to have divine light on our sins, but to do the best we can.

(a) Give more time to contrition than to this examination.

(b) Do not forget the duties of your state of life—a thing usually forgotten or hurried over.

(c) It is an opening of our minds to the light. We need not be afraid of the bad in us provided we remember the good in God.

G: Satisfaction

The effects of baptism and penance are distinct even though both sacraments forgive sin.

1. *In baptism:*
All sins are forgiven, both original and actual, mortal and venial, together with all imperfections and also the temporal and eternal punishment due to sin.

2. *Not so in penance:*
(a) Mortal and venial sins are wiped out together with the eternal punishment; but the temporal punishment remains in part at least, in most cases. This debt must be paid in this life or the next, and it provides the reason for the satisfaction we have to make in this sacrament.

(b) It is in accord with God's justice and also with his mercy not to pardon those sins committed after baptism, with full knowledge of what we are doing, without some small sanction. Otherwise men would continue to fall into them. Satisfaction is an excellent preventative as well as a punishment.

Satisfaction of works

1. The name indicates its nature—those works through and by which we pay the debt due for sins committed. If we do not perform this work in this life then we shall have to do it in purgatory, where it will not be meritorious.

2. All good works can have this value of satisfying for sin forgiven, but the following are worthy of special mention because they are recommended by the Church or by the Sacred Scriptures:

(a) Prayers, almsdeeds, external penances, either those which are sent to us by God and freely accepted by us, or those which are self-imposed.

(b) Penances are preached constantly by the Church, but especially during the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent. 'Whatsoever good you have done or evil which you have endured, may it be to thee for a remission of sins and the reward of eternal life.'

Sacramental satisfaction

In the sacrament of penance a small satisfaction is imposed by the priest—we call it the penance. This penance has special value because of its link with the sacrament. It forms part of it, and by means of this penance our good works are united directly and immediately with the merits of Christ's Passion. We should never forget that:

(a) Satisfactions made in this life are meritorious and win for us new degrees of grace and glory;

(b) Satisfactions made here on earth are more efficacious than those made in purgatory. If we use the satisfactions of Christ (which we can do only on earth) he will pay most of the debt for us; but if we leave it until we are in purgatory then we shall have to pay the whole of that debt ourselves.

The old and the new discipline

1. In the old days public penance had to be done to expiate for sins committed after baptism. During Lent, for example, such penances were imposed as sack-cloth and ashes worn at the doors of the churches, almsdeeds, assisting the sick and dying, fasts (and they were long and rigorous fasts too), special prayers.

2. Nowadays the penance is secret, as is confession. Usually it consists of some short prayers, small sacrifices or other good works which are well within our power.

Our attitude towards satisfaction

1. We must hold it as a most serious obligation—I will repay should be our motto with regard to sin.

2. We must accept the penance given us in a spirit of humility and deep sorrow, and we must fulfil it as soon as we can, because carelessness may cause us to forget it altogether.

3. It is a good thing to ask the confessor to increase our penances, especially when they are some good works which we can do easily over a relatively long period, such as the rosary for a week. The spirit of penance is what is needed in this matter.

H: Contrition

A good confession

To St John Bosco is attributed the phrase: More souls are condemned for making bad confessions than for not confessing at all. Hence the need for instruction on the different parts of the sacrament.

Contrition

1. It means repentance—not remorse. Judas had remorse, but he was not sorry in the sense of having real contrition; David however, when he said: I have sinned before the Lord, was truly sorry. Contrition, then, is true sorrow for sin together with a hatred of it and a firm resolution not to fall into it again.

2. Therefore it has two aspects, one which looks backwards to the sin committed and hates it, the other which looks forward to the future, and makes a resolution.

Contrition is required

1. No sorrow—no pardon. It was always necessary, even in the Old Testament, to obtain pardon for sin, says the Council of Trent.

2. By sin we separate ourselves from God; by sorrow we turn to God once more; the will which misdirected us now directs us aright. This is what St Ambrose meant when he wrote: Sin is only removed by tears and penances.

Perfect and imperfect contrition

1. They are distinguished by the motive; the first is motivated by love for God—we are sorry for our sins because we have offended the infinite majesty of the Supreme Being, not because of what may happen to us; the second is motivated by the fear of hell, which we have deserved for our sins, or by other motives.

2. Both are good, but they cause the forgiveness of sins in different ways; perfect contrition forgives sin even before we have confessed it; imperfect contrition can only forgive sin in the actual act of sacramental confession.

How to acquire sorrow for sin

1. Think on the motives we have for it:
   (a) the goodness and lovableness of God;
   (b) the crucifixion—result of sin;
   (c) the dangers of the fire of hell for eternity if we do not repent.

2. We should not attempt to excite ourselves to sorrow by considering:

(a) ourselves:

The best product of such consideration would be self-love; the worst, hopeless discouragement.

(b) sin in itself:

This is dangerous.

3. Rather we should first concentrate on God and our love for him, because whosoever love God intensely cannot be indifferent to sin.

4. Because of their love for God the saints had more sorrow for deliberate venial sins than most of us have for mortal sin.

5. Study of the Sacred Passion is a most useful method of attaining true sorrow—our sins had a ven' definite part (and a horrible one) to play in that mystery' of love and sorrow.

I: The Purpose of amendment

What is it?

1. It is included in our contrition and is the best test of whether we are truly sorry' or not. If we really hate sin then we shall do our best to avoid it—and the occasions of sin—in the future.

2. It is a firm decision of the will not to commit these sins again.

Qualities of a firm purpose of amendment

1. *Universal:*

It must cover all mortal sins.

2. *Supernatural and internal:*

Not merely human motives must move us.

3. *Firm—decided:*

It is not enough to say I would like to avoid them, we must be firmly determined to put into practice all the means necessary'. Pilate wished to release our Saviour—had he willed it he would have done it. This is the most difficult act of the penitent.

4. *Efficacious:*

This does not mean that we shall never sin again; but it implies that we are going to take active means to avoid such falls.

Occasions of sin

i. The real proof of whether we have a firm purpose or not to avoid sin. A proximate occasion is one which alw'ays or nearly always leads us to commit sin (w'e are talking of grave sin). It may be reading, companions, amusements, films—indeed anything. It is therefore something relative to the individual—it is hard to make definite rules as to what are and what are not occasions of sin.

2. The true purpose of amend ment must include—if it is genuine—the resolution to avoid the proximate occasions of sin; otherwise it is a self-delusion. St Alphonsus says that most bad confessions are bad through lack of practical amendment.

The importance of the purpose of amendment

1. It has been said that: To confess and not change one's life is to condemn oneself; It is also said: Hell is paved with good intentions.

2. It is the most important part of confession (together with contrition of which it is a part) because it is the only real proof we have as to the genuine nature of our sorrow for sin.

3. If we are not sorry for sins then it is an irreverence to confess them; if we have not decided to do anything practical to avoid the sins we have confessed then there is serious reason for us to suspect that we are not truly sorry for them—in which case there is no absolution.

4. Confession without repentance involves self-deception and does us more harm than good. The sacrament of penance does not operate like a charm, and absolution touches only those sins for which we are sorry and which we are determined to avoid.

J: Faith and the Resurrection

The apologetic value of this Gospel

1. The whole story of the Resurrection as we find it in the Gospels has an enormous apologetic value. Anyone who reads it without prejudice must say: This is the truth; this is history:

(a) No literary artist could have imagined the story as it is described for us by the evangelists; in their story we see the slow change which came over them as the truth dawned on their minds.

(b) From the absolute lack of faith to the falling down at our Lord's feet to adore the hidden divinity, as happens in the case of Thomas, there is a whole series of events and reactions, narrated with a naturalness which is beyond invention; no artifice of literary effort could produce such a page as this.

2. Even the apparent contradictions have their value, because they prove lack of collusion on the part of the Evangelists.

Faith comes from heaven

I. We cannot acquire it by our own efforts, so that even apologetic arguments, strong as they may be, have only a relative value in regard to it.

(a) They may remove obstacles, prepare us and dispose us to receive the gift of faith—but they cannot give it.

(b) The best disposition is humility of heart and simplicity of spirit.

2. In the characters who move around these scenes we see very different dispositions with regard to faith:

(a) In some their simplicity, goodness of heart, love for Christ and desire to find him are just below the surface all the time. Thus it is with the holy women and with Peter.

(b) In others a clear good-will is mixed with other dispositions which are imperfect, as is the case with the disciples from Emmaus.

(c) In others—we are not told who they were exactly—there were other intermediate states of mind, but the same fundamental good-will and love for Christ. (Cf. Luke 24. 41.)

(d) Thomas merits a chapter apart from the rest.

i. His obstinacy is inexplicable, going beyond the norms of human prudence and discretion. In this matter Thomas was hard-heartedly obstinate. We would say (by human standards) that he deserved to be condemned and cast out of the apostolic college.

ii. Christ's long-suffering mercy showed itself clearly in the case of Thomas; he searches him out and submits to his conditions, he almost humiliates himself to regain Thomas' confidence and faith.

Conclusion

1. If faith is a gift of God then we must ask for it earnestly and with great humility. There are many souls who are in this intermediate state, as Thomas was. Their solution is humble prayer for the gift of faith.

2. St Augustine says that, if we refuse to believe, then we shall be even more obstinate than Thomas, because we possess greater and more perfect testimony to the truth than even he did. The very obstinacy of Thomas becomes a further argument for the resurrection—and therefore for the truth *of Christ's whole* teaching.

3. May *God* grant us the spirit of *faith of the holy women. At least* we can pray for it, and if we *do then God will* hear our prayer *and* we, too, shall fall at *the feet of Jesus and say: My Lord and my God.*

Second Sunday after Easter

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: i Peter 2. 21-25 Gospel: John 10. 11-16

Texts which refer to the office *of* Shepherd

1. *The kings and priests as pastors ofIsrael:*

It is not so long since Israel marched under thy orders, when Saul was still reigning; and the Lord has promised thee that thou shouldst be its shepherd and its captain. 2 Kings 5. 2.

My voice that says to Cyrus, I give thee a shepherd's part to play; it is for thee to carry out my whole purpose. Isaias 44. 28.

The very shepherds have forgotten their craft; see them go their ways, each busy, first and last, with gorging his own appetite: . . . Isaias 56. 11.

... And you shall have shepherds of his own choice to guide you well and prudently. Jer. 3. 15.

And the cause of it? Unskilful shepherds that would have no recourse to the Lord; see how their art has failed them, and all the flock is scattered far and wide. Jer. 10. 21.

Word came to me from the Lord: Now, son of man, prophesy doom to the rulers of Israel, the shepherds of my flock. This be thy message from the Lord God: Out upon Israel's shepherds, that had a flock to feed and fed none but themselves; the milk drank, the wool wore, the fat lambs slaughtered, but pastured these sheep of mine never at all! The wasted frame went unnourished, the sick unhealed; nor bound they the broken limb, nor brought strayed sheep home, nor lost sheep found; force and constraint were all the governance they knew. So my sheep fell a-wandering, that shepherd had none; every wild beast fell a-preying on them, and they scattered far and wide. All over the hills they strayed, all over the country-side were scattered, this flock of mine, and no search was made for them, no search at all. Ezech. 34. 1-6.

2. *God himselfis the pastor ofIsrael:*

This is what the Lord God says: I mean to go looking for this flock of mine, search it out for myself. As a shepherd, when he finds his flock scattered all about him, goes looking for his sheep, so will I go looking for these sheep of mine, rescue them from all the nooks into which they have strayed when the dark mist fell upon them.

Rescued from every kingdom, recovered from every land, I will bring them back to their own country; they shall have pasture on the hillsides of Israel, by its water-courses, in the resting places of their home. Yes, I will lead them out into fair pastures, the high mountains of Israel shall be their feeding-ground, the mountains of Israel, with soft grass for them to rest on, rich feed for them to graze on. Food and rest, says the Lord God, both these I will give to my flock. The lost sheep I will find, the strayed sheep I will bring home again; bind up the broken limb, nourish the wasted frame, keep the well-fed, and the sturdy free from harm, they shall have a true shepherd at last.... None shall doubt that I, the Lord their God, am at their side, and they are my own people, the race of Israel, the Lord God says: Flock of mine, the Lord God says, flock of my pasturing, you are but men, yet I, the Lord, am your God. Ezech. 34. 11-31. Cf. Ps. 22, 1-2; 79, 2.

3. *Christy the shepherd of souls:*

They shall have a single shepherd to tend all of them now, who should tend them but my sen ant David ? He shall be their shepherd, and I, the Lord, will be their God, now that he rules them on earth; such is my divine promise to them. Ezech. 34. 23-24.

And when they had eaten Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, dost thou care for me more than these others ? Yes, Lord, he told him, thou knowest well that I love thee. And he said to him, Feed my lambs. And again, a second time, he asked him, Simon, son *of* John, dost thou care for me ? Yes, Lord, he told him, thou knowest well that I love thee. He said to him, Tend my shearlings. Then he asked him a third question, Simon, son of John, dost thou love me ? Peter was deeply moved w hen he was asked a third time, Dost thou love me? and said to him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou canst tell that I love thee. Jesus said to him, Feed my sheep. John 21. 15-17.

May God, the author of peace, who has raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, that great shepherd, whose flock was bought with the blood of an eternal covenant, grant you every capacity for good, to do his will. Heb. 13. 20-21.

So, when the Prince of shepherds makes himself known, your prize will be that crown of glory w'hich cannot fade. 1 Peter 5. 4.

4. *The care for the flock of pastors and rulers:*

Be shepherds to the flock God has given you. Carry out your charge as God would have it done, cordially, not like drudges, generously, not in the hope of sordid gain; not tyrannizing, each in his own sphere, but setting an example, as best you may, to the flock, i Peter 5. 2-3.

Tell me this, if a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave those ninety-nine others on the

mountain side, and go out to look for the one that is straying? Matt. 18. 12.

Keep watch, then, over yourselves, and over God's Church, in which the Holy Spirit has made you Bishops; you are to be the shepherds of that flock which he won for himself at the price of his own blood. Acts 20. 28.

SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LITURGICAL

The image of the Good Shepherd is one which was familiar to the Christians from very early times. In fact, we may say that to those early Christians it was the symbol of Christ as the image of the Sacred Heart is today. It appears in the primitive paintings on the walls of the catacomb of Domitilla and it is constantly reproduced on the early Christian tombs, even at a period when there was a general dislike in the Church for statues and images. It is not surprising that the Church should have incorporated this image into her liturgy, especially at Easter time. Her favourite theme, we may say, is that the Good Shepherd is risen, he who gave his life for his sheep and met death for his flock.

The fact that, from the time of St Gregory the Great, the stational church was that of St Peter's, near the tomb of the *Pastor ovium,* gives greater solemnity to today's liturgy. The formulas of the Mass have a greater unity of theme than is usually to be found, all being grouped round the idea of the Good Shepherd. The Introit, which may seem at first sight to present some difficulty, is easily understood, when we remember that the act of die supreme Shepherd in dying for his sheep is truly the greatest act of divine mercy.

There seems to be a reference, too, to the Eucharist, in the Secret, Versicle and Postcommunion; in this sacrament Christ continues the task of feeding his sheep for all time. In it, too, is to be found the bond which unites the flock in Christ. The best gift we can ask from God is plainly included in the Postcommunion: in which we ask that, having participated in the sacrament which causes us to live with the very life of Christ, he will grant us the enjoyment for all eternity of that grace which we have today received.

II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

A: The Epistle: 1 Peter 2. 21-25

i. *The argument:*

This letter of St Peter marks the period of the beginning of the era of persecution in Rome. For this reason he says to the faithful,

Do not be surprised, beloved, th.it this fiery ordeal should have befallen you, to test your quality; there is nothing strange in what is happening to you (4.12). Now, it is well known that the persecution was accompanied by certain accusations against the Christians, who were described as evil-doers. This could have a bad effect on the spread of the faith, and therefore they must be warned: Your life amidst the Gentiles must be beyond reproach; decried as male-factors, you must let them see, from your honourable behaviour, what you are; they will praise God for you, when his time comes to have mercy on them (2. 12).

Since we are dealing here with a proof of virtue which the Christians must give to the Gentiles it is logical that St Peter should recommend to their attention the social virtues, such as obedience to the civil authorities (13-17), and the submission of slaves to their masters (18-25).

So far as the general ideas of this section of his epistle are concerned, it will be clear that they are the same as those of St Paul. We can see this very clearly if we compare this passage with Eph. 6. 5-8; Col. 3. 22-25 an^ 1 Tim. 6. 1-2.

2. *Patience in enduring suffering:*

This is the lesson taught in the whole epistle. When one is writing to slaves, mere chattels in the hands of their masters, what else is there to say? Peter warns them that they must be obedient and submissive to their masters, not merely out of fear of the lash—If you do wrong and are punished for it, your patience is nothing to boast of; it is the patience of the innocent sufferer that wins credit in God's sight (v. 20). Indeed, he goes on, You are engaged to this by the call of Christ; he suffered for our sakes and left you an example, you were to follow in his footsteps.

Slavery is over, officially, but there is still injustice, persecution and miser}' to be endured.

3. *The example of Christ:*

Verses 22-24 are a repetition of Isaias 53. It may seem strange to us that Peter, an eye-witness of the drama, should have made use of the writings of a prophet to describe it; but we must remember that, to Peter, the words of Sacred Scripture were most important and had more probative force than his own testimony of personal experience. As he says in his second epistle (1.19), after relating his personal vision of Ihabor. Now the w'ord of the prophets gives us more confidence than ever. For this reason, perhaps, we find that these two epistles are mosaics of pieces of the Old Testament. In any case, the theme of the Senant of God applied to Christ the Messias will mean a great deal to the Christians who were servants of Nero!

4. *Comparison between Peter and Isaias:*

The argument proceeds as follows:

He suffered for our sakes, and left you his own example; you were to follow in his footsteps (v. 21). This Christ was innocent:

He did no wrong, no treachery was found on his lips; he was ill spoken of, and spoke no evil in return, suffered and did not threaten vengeance, gave himself up into the hands of injustice (1 Pet. 2.22 if.)

The Prophet says: He, that wrong did never, nor had treason on his lips! (Isaias 53. 9). A victim? Yet he himself bows to the stroke; no word comes from him. Sheep led away to the slaughter-house, lamb that stands dumb while it is shorn; no word from him.

He offered his life for the sins of men and for their salvation. Thus, St Peter: So, on the cross, his own body took the weight of our sins; we were to become dead to our sins, and live for holiness; it was his wounds that healed you (v. 24).

The Prophet: Be sure it is for my people's guilt that I have smitten him.... His life laid down for guilt's atoning ... (v. 10)... Nay, here is one despised, . . . our weakness and it was he who carried the weight of it, our miseries and it was he "who bore them. A leper, so we thought of him, a man God had smitten and brought low; and all the while it was for our sins he was wounded, it was guilt of ours crushed him down; on him the punishment fell that brought us peace, by his bruises we were healed (w. 3-5).

The result would be the gathering together of the lost sheep. St Peter says: Till then, you had been like sheep going astray; now, you have been brought back to him, your shepherd, who keeps watch over your souls (v. 25).

Isaias: Strayed sheep, all of us, each following his own path; and God laid on his shoulders our guilt, the guilt of us all (v. 6).

5. *The text:*

(a) Indeed you are engaged to this . . .

The Liturgy has suppressed this part of the verse, which gives the orientation to the whole passage, indicating that it refers to those who were slaves (or perhaps to all those who are sad). Theirs is a special vocation; they have been chosen by the Father to imitate his Son in his sufferings and also in his intercession, for their own sins and for those of others. They must do it for love of God. Those who are sick, in poverty or sad should meditate on this idea.

(b) Verse 23 has been badly translated in the Vulgate. More probably it should read: He gave himself up into the hands of one who judges jusdy. The idea is that he surrendered himself into the hands of the Father for us.

(c) His own body took the weight of our sins . . .

The Greek word used here for 'carry' has the traditional sense of taking to the altar, in this case the cross. St Peter's

words suggest the idea of a sacrifice of expiation, so applicable to suffering.

(d) Like sheep going astray . . .

The straying is, of course, error and sin; the shepherd, Christ.

6. *The lesson:*

That taught by St Peter was this, the Catholic should be the first to comply with the orders of the civil authorities so as not to give a motive for scandal; also because it is the will of God, which we should see in that of our lawful superiors.

Suffering, a source of merit, makes us like Christ. The divine Shepherd had to begin by gathering together his flock, and what sufferings it cost him to do so!

The final picture is that of the sorrows and bloody sacrifice of the Servant of God, Christ.

B: The Gospel: John io. 11-16

There is no need for a long explanation because in other sections we shall see the Fathers describing this scene.

Explanation of the parable:

Jesus, on discovering that the blind man whom he had cured had been cast out of the synagogue for his spirited defence of the Prophet, sought him out and, perhaps while he was still at his feet in adoration, he commented to those who had gathered around: I have come into this world that a sentence may fall upon it, that those who are blind should see, and those who see should become blind (John 9. 39).

Some of the Pharisees who were also there smiled at this: Are we blind too? they asked *{ibid.* 40).

If you were blind, Jesus told them, you would not be guilty. It is because you protest, We can see clearly, that you cannot be rid of your guile *{ibid.* 41). In continuation, setting himself up in opposition to those evil shepherds of Israel, he speaks this parable—one of the most beautiful in the Gospels. In verses 1-15 he tells them the parable; and then, because they could not or would not understand it, he continues by applying each one of its terms (w. 7-18). For a correct understanding of it we must keep in mind the customs of the shepherds in our Lord's day—not so very different from those still in existence in Palestine.

The shepherd was poorly dressed, carrying only a sling and other deficient weapons to defend his flock against the attacks of wild beasts (1 Kings 17. 40). In the days of our Lord it would seem that the wild beasts were wolves (Isaias 31. 4).

From the time of the disappearance of the great shepherds such as Abraham the usual custom was to join the flocks of various owners at night, shutting them in a sheep-fold made of thorn branches. In this there was a rough doorway through which the

sheep passed one by one, thus giving the shepherd a chance to count them. At dawn each shepherd would come to the door in turn and either call or whistle to his flock. Knowing his voice, they followed him.

The existence of robbers was well-known—indeed, they were so numerous that David could boast of the fact that he had not stolen a single sheep from Nabal (i Kings 25. 7). This fact made it necessary to keep watch in all λveathers (Gen. 31. 40); in spite of this vigilance, sometimes through the shepherds' falling asleep, the robbers would manage to enter the fold by another way, having silenced the dogs (Isaias 56. 10), and steal some of the sheep. They would obviously avoid the door, which would be better guarded than the rest of the fold.

The shepherd, as he still does today, went in front of the sheep to lead them to the richest pastures (Gen. 29. 7; Ex. 3.1 ; Ps. 22. 2), and above all, in a land not blessed with much water, to find the streams. This often obliged him to live near the well and to defend it with his arms (Gen. 21. 25; 26. 20; Ex. 2. 17).

The lovable image of the shepherd with the sheep on his shoulder has its counterpart in the Old Testament (cf. Gen. 33. 13; Isaias 40. 11).

With this data in mind the parable is easy to understand and so is its lesson, especially in view of the authors who will be quoted later. For this reason there is no need to dwell on the text.

SECTION III. THE FATHERS

I. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

(The extracts are taken from his sermons on the priesthood. PG. 26. 623, and also from his sermon on this Sunday, PG. 59. 327.)

1. *Grandeur and virtues of the priest—the good shepherd:*

(a) The greatest love for Christ—to pasture his sheep:

Christ himself declared that it was the greatest proof of love we can give him. Speaking to him who was the head of the Apostles, he said : Peter, dost thou love me ? When Peter replied in the affirmative the Lord added : Feed my sheep. The Master asks the disciple if he loves him, not because he needed the knowledge, but to teach us how important to him is the feeding of his sheep. This being so, it is equally true that a great prize will be destined for the one who labours at that task which Christ appreciates above all others. . ..

Peter, he says, Do you love me more than these ? Then feed my sheep. Obviously, he could have said: If you love me give yourself over to fasting, sleep on the ground, keep long vigils, defend the oppressed, be a father to the orphans and protect the widows.

However, the truth is that all these things I have mentioned can be performed easily by many of the faithful, whether men or women; but when it is a question of taking the lead in the Church and receiving the care of souls, then before the grandeur of that task, let women stand aside, together with the majority of men. Let those only stand forth who are as high above the others in virtue as Saul was in stature over the men of the Hebrew nation. It is not enough for the priest to stand head and shoulders above the rest; rather the distance between men and animals is that which should exist between the pastor and the sheep; if not greater, because far greater things are at stake. .. .

(b) The priest as mediator between God and men:

What must he be like who is made ambassador before God to represent the city? But why say the city—rather the whole world. By his prayer he must placate God's anger for the sins of all, not merely for the living, but also for the dead. For my part, I think that not even the confidence of Moses or Elias is sufficient for a plea of this kind. Because the priest approaches God as if the whole earth were confided to him and as if he were the father of all....

In what order or hierarchy shall we place the priest, when he calls upon the Holy Spirit and performs that great sacrifice, holding in his hands the Lord of all things? What purity and reverence should we not demand from him? Consider of what sort those hands must be which administer such mysteries; of what kind that tongue which pronounces these words, what purity and sanctity of soul which shelters such an Almighty Spirit. At that moment even the angels surround the priest and the whole altar, while the place of sacrifice is filled with these celestial powers, come to honour him who is there.

2. *The ministrations of the priest:*

(a) The priest and the Mystical Body:

. . . We are not now discussing the administration of com or barley, or oxen or sheep, nor indeed any such business; but that of the body of Christ, since the Church, according to the words of St Paul, is the Body of Christ. He to whom this body is confided must take special care of its health and procure for it the greatest possible beauty.... Now, how shall he to whom the task of caring for this body is given, whose struggles are not against other bodies but against invisible powers, how shall he be able to preserve it safe and healthy if he does not possess more than merely human virtue or if he does not know the remedy which each soul needs?

(b) The word:

Apart from example, there is no other health-giving remedy nor way of salvation save teaching, by means of the word. This is the instrument, this the food, this the best change of air. It takes the

place of medicine. ... If this remedy be not applied, then all the rest are useless. By it we raise the soul which has fallen, we bring down the proud, supply defects ... in fact, we do everything necessary for the salvation of souls.... If the priest does not possess this power then the souls of the faithful, especially the weak and curious, will be like ships in a constant storm. Wherefore the priest must spare no effort to acquire it.

(c) Constant and hard work:

The vast majority of the priest's subjects find themselves caught up in the cares and traps of life, and this makes them weak and lazy in the practice of spiritual things. From which it follows that the priest must be sowing the seed constantly, so that by these repeated sowings, the word of God may grow in his hearers. Too much money, the grandeur of power, softness springing from pleasure and many other things choke the seed, and at times the weeds grow in such a fashion that they do not allow it to come above ground. On the contrary, material worries and the needs of the poor, sufferings and many other hardships also drive away those who suffer them from the care for spiritual things. Lastly, the priest cannot hear the greater part of his people's sins; and how can he possibly have this knowledge if he does not even know them by sight?

3. *The conditions required to accept the priesthood:*

(We cannot neglect this section altogether, but it is so long that we shall have to give a summary of it, quoting only now and again from the actual words of the Saint.)

(a) Of good character, even-tempered and possessing great fortitude:

Tt is easy to despise food, but it is not easy to put up with the insults, mockings, calumnies of one's subordinates or the unreasonable reproaches of one's superiors. The fact that a priest does not appear weak from fasting or does not go about unshod will not cause any harm to the Church of God; but a hard character is the source of much evil both for him who possesses it and also for his subordinates.'

He who does not know how to master his anger 'when the government of a whole community is confided to him becomes like a wild beast, hunted on all sides, who can neither live in peace nor allow others to do so . . .'.

(b) Angelic purity:

'The priest must possess a soul which, is more pure than the sun's rays, so that the Holy Spirit may never abandon him and he may be able to say: I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me.'

After pointing out that the monks have a defence in their convent which the priest in the world has not, he points out that greater

purity is demanded of the priest. Tf anyone should think it a wonderful thing to be always above himself and flee from contact with people, I tor one would not deny that this is a proof of fortitude, but I also say that it is no proof of all that the human soul is capable of; because the pilot who is at the helm inside the port has not yet given sufficient proof of his skill. But he who, on the high seas and in the midst of the storm brings the ship to safety7; he it is who is hailed as a perfect pilot?

(c) Piety is not enough; there must also be knowledge:

In fact, the priest must be a man of many parts. 'He must be at one and the same time grave and simple, terrible and lovable, impossible to bribe yet sympathetic to others, humble without being servile, vehement and vet meek?

(d) He must remember that his faults stand out more than those of other men and that he is more closely7 watched by the people. For this reason not merely7 do his sins do more harm than those of others, who have not his exalted position, but also even his small faults appear great to the eyes of the world.

We may sum up the saint's teaching in this one passage:

'It is a grave thing, beloved, a grave thing indeed, to have the care of a church; it is a task that demands a measure of love and courage as great as that of Christ himself, so that a man may lay down his life for his flock, may never abandon them, facing the wolf boldly. It is in this that the shepherd differs from the hireling. For the latter, indifferent to the fate of the sheep, is always looking to his own safety7; while the former, regardless of his own comfort, seeks the safety of his sheep?

IL ST AUGUSTINE

(Extracts taken from PL. 38, Serm. 137)

1. *Christy the door:*

Now, when our Lord was speaking on this occasion he said that he was the Shepherd and also the door. In the head he is the door, in the body the shepherd. For he said to Peter, on whom alone he built his Church, Peter, lovest thou me? He answered, Yea, Lord, I love thee. Feed my sheep. . . . And so after the resurrection the Lord asks him; not as though he did not know with what fervour he would confess his love for Christ, but so that, by the three-fold confession of love, he might cancel out the three-fold denial.

Who is it that enters in by the door? He who enters in through Christ. Who is this? He who associates himself with the passion of Christ; he who has learned the humility *of Christ; so that he has* learned that, though God has become man for us, man *himself is* not God, but man still, for he who desires to appear as God when

he is but man, is no follower of him who, being God, became man for us.

... Know that you are stained by sin. Let the blemish in your soul be made manifest in confession and you shall belong to the flock of Christ. For the confession of your sins invites your Physician to heal you.... He that climbs up, you will perceive, does not enter in, but falls; while he who bows himself down that he may enter by the door, he does not fall. . . .

2. *The hireling:*

There are men in the Church of God of whom the apostle says that they preach the gospel because of their circumstances, seeking from men some profit, money, honour or human praise (Philip. 2.21). They preach the gospel seeking gain by any means, seeking, not so much the salvation of those to whom they preach, but their own advantage.... But what is it that is said of hirelings? Amen, amen I say to you, they have received their reward (Matt. 6. 2). But what does the apostle say of the true shepherd? If any man shall cleanse himself of these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and profitable to the Lord, prepared unto every good work.

3. *The practical rule:*

How do I gather grapes from thorns? Because thou, O Lord, hast said: What they say to you, do; what they do, do ye not. . . . The Lord will answer you: I did not bid you gather grapes from thorns; but see and note well whether the vine, as sometimes happens, when it wanders about the ground is not entangled in thorns? For sometimes we notice this, a vine planted near a hedge of thorns, on throwing out its branches, entangles them in the thorns of the hedge and the clusters hang down amid the thorns. He that sees them gathers the grapes, not indeed from the thorns, but from the vine entangled in the thorns.... Do you gather the grapes; the thorns will not pierce you since you read, Whatsoever they say to you, do; what they do, do ye not. Their works are thorns; their words the grapes; but they are from the vine, that is, from the chair of Moses.

III. ST GREGORY THE GREAT

(Extracts from Hom. 14 on St John's Gospel, PL. 76)

1. *The obligation of the shepherd—to give himself:*

He has done what he commanded; he has given us an example in what he ordered us to do. The Good Shepherd has laid down his life for the sheep, so that in our sacrament he might change his own Body and Blood and so nourish with the food of his flesh the sheep whom he has redeemed.

And there are some shepherds who, loving earthly possessions

more than their sheep, rightly forfeit the name of shepherds... he is called not a shepherd but a hireling who feeds his flock in the Lord, not from inward love, but from a desire for earthly gain. He is a hireling who, while holding the place of shepherd, seeks not the good of souls; who hungers for earthly privileges, revels in the dignit)' of his office, grows fat on its temporal rewards, and takes delight in the respect men show to him. For these are the wages of the hireling, that he may have what he worked for here below, while taking care of the sheep, but afterwards he is a stranger to the inheritance of his flock.

2. *The hireling:*

W hether a man is indeed a shepherd or a hireling can only be known during times of trial; for in times of peace, just as the true shepherd stays by his flock, so does the hireling. But should a wolf appear, then each one will reveal with what mind he has been taking care of the sheep. For a wolf descends upon the flock whenever some lawless person or robber oppresses those of the faithful who are poor and lowly. Then the one who seemed to be a shepherd and was not, leaves the sheep and flies; for he is fearful of danger for himself and so does not dare to stand firm against the aggressor. He flies, not by giving ground, but by withdrawing his help ... he sees injustice and says nothing; he flies, because he takes refuge in silence ... for to go up and face the enemy means to oppose with the free voice of reason any power whatsoever that is acting wickedly. . . .

But there is another wolf w ho daily and without ceasing tears, not the body, but at the soul, namely, that evil spirit who prowls about watching the fold of the faithful, seeking the death of souls. . . . The wolf comes and the hireling flies when the malignant spirit tears at the souls of the faithful by temptation, and he who holds the office of shepherd feels no anxiety. Souls are perishing while he takes delight in the comforts of this world. The wolf catches and scatters the sheep when he seduces one by means of lust, inflames another with avarice, swells another through pride, destroys another through anger, provokes another by envy, overthrows this one by fraud. . . . The sole reason why the hireling flies is because he is a hireling. As if he were openly to say: He cannot stand fast in the face of danger who ministers to his flock, not because he loves the sheep, but because he is looking for earthly profit. For as long as he is held in honour and as long as he takes delight in temporal advantages, he will hesitate to stand against danger, lest he lose what he loves.

3. *The sheep:*

As you have heard then, dearest brethren, the danger to which we are exposed, reflect on that danger to which you also are liable, according to our Lord's words. Think whether you are his sheep;

reflect whether or not you know him; whether you know the light of truth. You know, I affirm, not through faith, but through love; not from faith, I say, but from charity. For he who tells us this, John the Evangelist, bears witness: He who saith that he knoweth him, and kcepeth not his commandments is a liar (i John 2. 4).

4. *The pasture—heaven:*

Let us, then, seek this pasture, where we shall share in the joy of so many friends. Let their joyfulness invite us to the feast. . . . Here it is the rejoicing of all the chosen people of heaven, all rejoicing with one another on their coming together, and yet we, lukewarm as we are, towards that eternal love, burn with no desire for it, seek not to be present at so great a solemnity. We deprive ourselves of everlasting blessedness and we are happy! Let us enkindle our souls as a light. Let faith grow fervent in what it has believed. Let our desires grow eager for the things of heaven; and thus to love is already to attain it. Let no adversity turn us away from this joy and fulfilment ... let no smiling good fortune turn us away; for he is a foolish traveller who, beholding on his way a pleasant meadow, forgets to go on in the way he was going. Let the soul therefore long for its heavenly home. Let it grasp at nothing in this world; for well we know that it will soon let go.

IV. ST BERNARD

Not in vain did Christ say to Peter, as he commended to him his sheep, Peter, do you love me? If I mistake not, this is the same as to say: If your conscience does not assure you that you love me, and what is more, that you love me perfectly, that is, more than what you possess, more than your own relatives, more than yourself—then do not take on this office on any account. Do not lay on your shoulders such a heavy burden, nor interfere with those sheep for whom I shed my blood. A terrible statement, capable of making the blood of the worst tyrant run cold.

Therefore, all those who have taken on this ministry, look to yourselves and to the precious deposit which has been confided to you. It is a city'; guard well its concord and safety. It is a spouse; look to its adornment. They are sheep; see that you feed them! Perhaps these three ideas correspond to the triple interrogation made to Peter; because, in order to guard a city, it is necessary to protect it from three evils: from the violence of tyrants, the frauds of heretics and the temptations of the demons. The true adornment of a spouse should consist in good works, good customs, decorous and prudent conduct. The pasture for the sheep is found in the inheritance of the Sacred Scriptures.. . . For this reason the zealous pastors of soulswill never cease to feed them with their good example;

I say with their ow n, not merely with that of others. Because if they feed them only with the good example of others it would be a shameful thing for them and of little use to the sheep (Serm. 76, on the *Canticle of Canticles').*

SECTION IV. A THEOLOGIAN

ST THOMAS AQUINAS

1. *Christy the Good Shepherd:*

There is a three-fold difference between the good and the bad shepherd: with regard to the end in view, the care for the sheep and the love which prompts them:

(a) The end in view:

The name given to each reveals their condition. The good is called a shepherd, because his intention is to pasture the sheep, that is, to l k out for their good; the evil one is called a hireling because he seeks reward. The bad shepherd uses the sheep for his own ends.

(b) The care of the sheep:

Of the good shepherd it is said that the sheep are his, not merely because they have been confided to him, but also because of the love and care with which he dedicates himself to them. On the contrary, of the hireling it is said that the sheep are not his, i.e. because he is not solicitous for their welfare.

(c) The love:

Because the good shepherd loves his sheep in such a way that he gives his life for them; that is, he runs into danger for them to the extent, if necessary, of losing his earthly life. So far as the bad shepherd is concerned, since he has no real love for the sheep, he flies as soon as he sees the approach of the wolf.

2. *The office of a good shepherd:*

The first requisite is love, for which reason the Gospel says: the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep.

No one can be said to be a good shepherd unless he is joined by charity with Christ and becomes himself a member of the Good Shepherd.

The good shepherd suffers much, even in this life, on account of the flock whose good he is seeking. Among earthly shepherds one does not demand that the good shepherd should give his life for the sheep; but, since the salvation of the spiritual flock is more important than the earthly life of the shepherd, when there is imminent danger to the salvation of the flock then the good shepherd should suffer the loss of his earthly life for the flock.

3. *Good sheep:*

Three things arc required in the good sheep:

(a) Obedience to the commandments of God; for which reason it is said they shall hear my voice (John 10. 16), which means, they shall keep my commandments.

(b) Unity in charity: There shall be one fold.

(c) The unity of faith: And one shepherd (John 10. 16).

4. *The bishops, pastors of the flock:*

(a) The name is one of office, not of honour:

As Gregory says *{Pastor,* i. 8): When the apostle said this, he who was set over the people was the first to be dragged to the torments of martyrdom, so that there was nothing to be desired in the episcopal office but the good work. Wherefore Augustine says *{De Civ. Dei.* 19. 19) that when the apostle said Whoever desireth the office of bishop, desireth a good work, he wished to explain what the episcopacy is: for it denotes work, not honour ... thus a man may know himself to be no bishop if he loves to precede rather than to profit others.

(b) The perfection of bishops:

There is no parity between the religious and the episcopal state, for two reasons. First because perfection of life is a pre-requisite of the episcopal state, as appears from our Lord asking Peter if he loved him more than the others, before committing the episcopal office to him, whereas perfection is not a pre-requisite of the religious state, since the latter is the way to perfection. . . . The reason for this difference is because, according to Dionysius, perfection pertains actively to the bishop as the perfecter, but to the monk passively, as one who is perfected; and one needs to be perfect in order to bring others to perfection, but not in order to be brought to perfection.... He who enters the episcopal state is raised up to watch over others, and no man should seek to be raised thus, according to Heb. 5.4.... And Chrysostom says: To desire supremacy in the Church is neither just nor useful. For what wise man seeks of his own accord to submit to such servitude and peril, as to have to render an account of the whole Church? None save him who fears not God's judgement, and makes a secular abuse of his ecclesiastical authority, by turning it to secular uses (2-2. a. 185. a. 1 *ad uun, ad 211m).*

In designating a man for the episcopal office something has to be considered on thc part of the person designated and something on the part of the designator. For on the part of the designator ... it is required that he choose such a one as will dispense the divine mysteries faithfully. These should be dispensed for the good of the Church, according to 1 Cor. 14· I2· · · · Consequently, he who has

to choose or appoint one for a bishop is not bound to take one who is best simply, but one who is best for governing the Church, one namely who is able to instruct, defend and govern the Church peacefully.... On the part of the person appointed, it is not required that he esteem himself better than others, for this would be proud and presumptuous; but it suffices that he perceive nothing in himself which would make it unlawful for him to take up the office of prelate.

(c) The governing ability:

According to i Cor. 12. 4 there are diversities of graces. . . . Hence, nothing hinders one from being more fitted for the office of governing who does not excel in the grace of holiness. It is otherwise in the government of the natural order, where that which is higher in the natural order is more fitted therefore to dispose of those that are lower (2-2. q. 185. a. 3 *in* c. *et ad yum).*

(d) Active and contemplative:

Although simply and absolutely speaking the contemplative life is more excellent than the active, and the love of God better than the love of our neighbour, yet, on the other hand, the good of many should be preferred to the good of the individual. Wherefore Augustine says: Nor prefer your own ease to the needs of the Church, and all the more since it belongs to the love of God that a man undertake the pastoral care of Christ's sheep . .. (q. 185. a. 2 *ad mm).*

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(e) More excellent in knowledge and holiness . . .

For he should aim at showing himself to be more excellent than others in both knowledge and holiness. Wherefore Gregory says :The occupations of a prelate ought to excel those of his people as much as the shepherd's life excels that of his flock. But he is not to be blamed and looked upon as worthless if he excelled not before being raised to the prelacy (q. 185. a. 3 *ad 211m).*

(f) Giving all for his sheep . . .

Renunciation of one's possessions may be considered in two ways. First as being actual; and thus it is not essential, but a means to perfection, as stated above *(art.* 3). Hence nothing hinders the state of perfection from being without renunciation of one's possessions, and the same applies to other outward practices. Secondly, it may be considered in relation to one's preparedness, in the sense of being prepared to renounce or give away all; and this belongs directly to perfection. . . . Now bishops especially are bound to despise all things for the honour of God and the spiritual welfare of their flock, when it is necessary for them to do so, by giving to the poor of their flock or by suftering with joy the being stripped of their own goods (q. 184. a. 7 *ad mm).*

(g) Ready to suffer anything:

Now bishops bind themselves to fulfil the pastoral office for the sake of the salvation of their subjects. Consequently, when the salvation of his subjects demands the personal presence of the pastor, the pastor should not withdraw his personal presence from his flock, neither for the sake of some temporal advantage, nor even on account of some impending danger to his person, since the good shepherd is bound to lay down his life for his sheep (q. 185. a 5 c).

SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. ST THOMAS OF VILLANOVA

(A summary of the sermon for the 2nd Sunday after Easter, from Vol. II of the *Opera Omnia* with an occasional direct quotation.)

A: The qualities of Christ, the Good Shepherd

1. *He feeds his sheep:*

(a) With material food, since he gives us all we have.

(b) With the spiritual food of doctrine, inspirations and the blessed sacrament.

(c) He brings us to the eternal pastures of heaven.

2. *He knows his sheep.*

3. *He defends them*—like David defending his flock against the lions.

B: Qualities of a good human shepherd

1. *Charity:*

Peter did not receive the government of the Church until he had answered the question—Simon, lovest thou me?

2. *Watchfulness:*

May the Lord never have to wake us up as he did Peter in the garden.

3. *Knowledge:*

The faithful seek in the priests and bishops the spiritual food of doctrine. 'Those who are tired of life, those who are overcome by the cares of this world, all turn to spiritual men in order to find the word of God; but O Holy Church, my mother; your officials are become like locusts, and those who should free the people are just the very ones who load them down with taxes and despoil them. O ye pastors, changed into scarecrows, you do not even know how to whistle in order to call your sheep. They might as well have been confided to the care of a statue of marble. . . . And what an account

they will have to give for these souls, for whom Christ suffered so great torments !'

4. *Responsibility:*

If I had collected at the foot of the cross the drops of blood which fell to the ground from the Saviour's wounds; if I had gathered them in a glass vessel, carried them with me and found it necessary to make long journeys with them, how great would be my preoccupation in the face of such a danger. Well, I have received the care of a deposit which a wise buyer, W isdom itself, paid for with that same blood and I possess this treasures in fragile vessels, surrounded by even greater dangers than ordinary glass receptacles. And what makes my preoccupation even greater, I have to watch over mv own conscience and those of others—yet I know neither. Both are, for me, a dark night, a bottomless abyss, yet it is required of me that I guard them both.

5. *Innocence:*

God seeks a man who will be as a wall between himself and us—that man is the priest. How can he fulfil this office without great purity ?

It was said of the priests of the old Law that their faces were more brilliant than the snow, but then they sinned and 'Here is none recognizing them in the streets, coal-black, skin clinging to bones, dry as wood !' That could happen to us if yve lose our first fervour.

II. ST TERESA OF AVILA

(The father of a family is, in his own way, the shepherd of his small flock. The saint mentions three kinds of wolves who can attack this flock: careless reading, bad companions and servants.)

1. *The danger from careless reading:*

What I shall now describe was, I think, something which began to do me a great deal of harm. I sometimes reflect how wrong it is of parents not to contrive that their children shall always, and in every way, see things which are good. My mother was, as I have said, very good herself, but when I came to the age of reason I copied her goodness very little, in fact, hardly at all; so evil things did me a great deal of harm. She was very fond of books of chivalry; and this pastime had not the ill effects on her that it had on me, because she never allowed them to interfere with her work. But we were always trying to make time to read them ; and she permitted this, perhaps to stop herself from thinking of the great trials she suffered and to keep the children occupied so that they' would not go astray' in other ways. This annoyed my father so much that we had to be very careful lest he should see us reading those books. For myself I

began to make a habit *of* it, and this little fault which I saw in my mother began to cool my good desires and lead me to other kinds of wrong-doing. I thought that there was nothing wrong in my wasting many hours of the day and night in this useless occupation, even though I had to hide it from my father. So excessively was I absorbed in it that unless I had a new book I believe I was never happy.

2. *Companions:*

I had some cousins who were the only people allowed to enter my father's house; he was very careful about this, and I wish to God that he had been careful about my cousins too. Now I see the danger of intercourse, at an age when the virtues should be beginning to grow, with persons who, though ignorant of worldly vanity, arouse a desire for the world in others. These cousins were almost exactly my own age or perhaps a little older than I. We always went about together and they were very fond of me. I would keep our conversations on things that amused them and listen to the stories they told about their childish escapades and crazes, which were anything but edifying. What was worse, my soul began to incline to the thing which was the cause of all its troubles.

If I had to advise parents I would tell them to take great care about the people with whom their children associate at such an age. Much harm may result from bad company and we are inclined by nature to follow what is worse rather than what is better. This was the case with me: I had a sister much older than myself, from whom, though she was good and chaste, I learned nothing, whereas from a relative whom we often had in the house, I learned every kind of evil. ... I am sometimes astonished by the harm which can be caused through bad company; if I had not experienced it I could not believe it. This is especially so when one is young, for it is then that the evil done is greatest. I wish parents would be warned by me and consider this very carefully. The result of my intercourse with this woman was to change me so much that I lost nearly all my soul's natural inclination to virtue, and was greatly influenced by her and by another person who indulged in the same kinds of pastime.

3. *Servants:*

But consequently my own wickedness sufficed to lead me into sin, together with the servants we had, whom I found quite ready to encourage me in all kinds of wrong-doing. Perhaps if any of them had given me good advice I might have profited by it; but they were as much blinded by their own interests as I was by my desire (*Life,* chap. 2).

III. CARDINAL MERCIER

(A summary of a series of retreats for priests given by the Cardinal to the clergy of his diocese at the end of the 1914 war.)

True Charity — its qualities

1. *The priest at the service of the faithful:*

The scene of our Lord on his knees washing the feet of the disciples gives us the best of all lessons and teaches us what apostolic government should really be. Its essence is charity. There is nothing so contrary to the gospel idea of authority than the desire to see our own personal will prevail. May you never have the urge to dominate your people except it be by means of your example and loving exhortation.

Do not be proud wielders of authority, but servants of the people, because when you have been given a position in the diocese and have accepted it, then you have given the people a right over you. I, as a bishop 'omnibus debitor sum' (Rom. 1. 14).

The constant service of the faithful is a hard thing. St Charles Borromeo stated that there are two ways of laying down one's life for those we love, one is tragic, such a martyrdom which is consummated in an instant; the other is permanent, and by it the sacrifice of serving our brethren is renewed twenty', a hundred times even' day. This is the method which should be characteristic of your lives as priests, you who are called secular because you live your lives in the world without being of it, just as our Lord did, who came on to this earth, took flesh, suffered and was buried. Your apostolate, therefore, is one of universal charity, magnanimous and full of labour.

2. *Universal charity:*

(a) With the parents . . .

Be the guardians of the home; favour those religious services in which the whole family is re-united. Exhort them to pray in common, and to take their recreation together, especially on Sundays. The present disordered state of most social classes demands special protective methods, among which we may name as excellent the Guild of the Blessed Sacrament for the men and the Union of Catholic Mothers. Teach the father to feel conscious of his position of authority' and the mother with her children to recognize in that authority a divine delegation.

(b) With those who suffer:

A he world creates a vacuum around itself; the soul which is sad tends to isolate itself, but it is necessary for you to open the door

to confidence. Your joys arc mine and also your sufferings. *Gaudere cum gaudentibus, flere cum flentibus* (Rom. 12. 15).

Visit the sick frequently and if you can do it, accompanied by another priest so that they may have freedom for confession, and do not neglect your attentions when the hour of agony comes, because those moving rites, as well as providing you yourselves with matter for meditation, will assure for you the love of that family when they see you so assiduous at the sick bed.

3. *Magnanimous charity:*

(a) Hard work . . .

Do not go to a corner in the cemetery to weep for the souls of the dead! Instead hurry forth to seek them and abhor routine. Youths are inclined to be hard working to the point of temerity, while the older priests are prudent to the point of doing very little. Happy the parish which has an older parish priest and a young curate united in brotherly harmony! Let both get together to make plans and take measures to deal with the parish, one acting as goad and the other as brake! Young priests are accustomed to confuse novelty with progress; they must learn that projects which have no roots except in the heart and imagination are not usually fertile. On the other hand, parish priests who have to hold the reins must remember that prudence does not consist in putting on the brake, but in directing, and thus they should act without presumption or fear.

(b) Patient work . . .

Act always with patience, especially with children, with penitents, with those who must always be attended at the time most convenient to them, not that which is less troublesome to us; with those who are importunate, remembering that the penance which is most pleasing to God is that which he sends; with the uneducated, remembering that if we have more culture than they, it is because it was given to us; with the ungrateful, those who are hostile, that we may be more like our Lord.

(c) Hidden work . . .

Many curates are enthusiastic as soon as they hear the word 'movement'—guilds, associations, liturgical movements, pilgrimages, excursions, etc. ; but they are more lazy when it comes to work which does not feed their self-esteem. Our Lord left us an inheritance of prayer, patience, care for the sick and the children; a treasure which is not praised by men but glorified by the Father who knows all secrets.

(d) Persevering work:

Who is not capable of a burst of energy ? There are some who cannot live without such outbursts, but the truth is that real virtue lies in constancy. The two fundamental conditions for success are

lack of confidence in oneself and perfect confidence in God. Work with the support of these two pillars and you will not tire because of the effort required nor because of the lack of results....

4. *Charity in action:*

(a) In temporal matters . . .

The money which the faithful give to the priest is not his; it belongs to the sen ice of God and the poor. Inordinate affection for money is the one vice which the faithful will never pardon in their priests.... Be poor and love it! Arrange matters in such a way that you die poor. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who being rich, became poor for our sake (2 Cor. 8. 9); in the name of our glorious predecessors from St Paul to the Cure D'Ars and Don Bosco; in the name of the liturgy', which causes us to pray : Blessed is the man who does not run after gold or put his hope in riches. ... I beg of you to strip yourselves of all that is superfluous in the matter of furniture, food and all that you possess.

(b) In spiritual matters . . .

You are mediators between God and man, therefore you should exercise this spiritual mediation in word, example, the sacraments and spiritual direction. Wherever you are, be priests! You are also mediators between the faithful and God. Let your sacerdotal mediation be intercession. Pray and do penance, and thus you will draw nearer to God. Our house is the church, and the church is a house of prayer.

(c) Hand over your liberty and your person :

All would seem to me to be little if I did not exhort you : Give yourself as our Lord did, who loved me and delivered himself for me (Gal. 2. 20). *Agnosce quod agis, imitare quod tractas,* Abbé Chevrier used to pray three times, once before the Crib, again before the crucifix and finally before the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle. His meditation was: I am a priest who has nothing; I am a crucified priest, I am a priest who is the food of the faithful.

5. *Final exhortation:*

Let us carry always in our hearts this final exhortation: Follow me, love me more than my faithful people, love me to the point where you are ready to lay down your life for me and be crucified for me. Then you will be a good shepherd. I hand over to you my sheep; feed them, because they are mine, not yours, and I shall demand an account from you of them. You are a priest, but with my priesthood ; you are a shepherd, but the flock is mine. Woe to you should you rob me of my sheep and use them for the benefit of your own sensuality', vanity, pride in command or lowly interests! Happy are you, blessed in your person and in your ministry', if you remain united to me by faith, by desire to imitate me and my love. I myself

will complete and make fruitful your labours. Fear nothing and nobody! If God be with you then who can stand against you? Simon Peter trusted in himself and denied me three times before a serving maid. Later he relied on faith in my divinity, was fortified by my love and thus participated in my cross and in my glory.

SECTION VI. PAPAL TEXTS

The good shepherd

(There is much fruit for meditation in the Address given every year by Pope Pius XII to the parish priests and Lenten preachers of Italy. However, we have preferred to give the main passages of the Encyclical *Menti Nostrae* on the priesthood, 23 Sept. 1950.)

1. *The priest and the present day needs:*

The voice of the divine Redeemer touches a cord in Our mind when he says to Peter: Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these ?... Feed my lambs, feed my sheep.... As we attentively reflect on these words we judge that it is the chief duty of our supreme ministry to do our utmost to advance daily the efficacy of the work of Bishops and priests—a work whose object is to lead the Christian people to avoid evil, overcome temptation and attain sanctity.... The need of a Christian renewal, of which all good men are today aware bids us turn Our thoughts and affections very particularly to the priests of the world, Living among the people, they are witnesses of their afflictions, sufferings and distresses of mind and body. It is, therefore, we are convinced, the priests, who by their humble, alert and assiduous zeal can bring about a moral restoration by the precepts of the Gospel and establish firmly on earth Jesus Christ's kingdom of justice, love and peace. . . .

2. *Holiness necessary:*

But the priestly ministry cannot be fully effective to meet the needs of our time unless priests surpass their people by the brightness of their eminent holiness, and are worthy ministers of Christ, faithful dispensers of the mysteries of God, efficient coadjutors of God, equipped for every good work.

3. *Virtues required:*

(a) Charity:

The priestly life takes its origin from Christ, and to him, therefore, it should at all times be wholly directed. But Christ is the Word of God who condescended to assume a human nature, lived an earthly life to obey the will of the Eternal Father, shed around him a sweetness as of the lily, lived in poverty, went round doing good and healing all, and finally offered himself as a victim for the salvation

of his brethren. Beloved sons, you have before your very eyes, so to speak, the sum of this wonderful life. Strive with all your might to reproduce it in yourselves, remembering the incentive offered: I have given you an example that as I have done to you, so do you also (John 13. 15).

(b) Humility:

A priest should not rely on his own strength nor take immoderate delight in his gifts. He should not seek the esteem and praise of men nor eagerly long for posts of greater importance. But let him imitate Christ who came not to be ministered unto but to minister; and let him deny himself, according to the rule laid down by the Gospel, and cling not too closely to earthly things, in order that he may follow the Divine Master more easily and more freely. Whatever he has or is comes from the goodness and power of God. If, then, he would glory, let him remember the words of the apostle of the Gentiles: For myself I will glory nothing, but in my infirmities.

(c) Obedience:

In our age, when the foundations of authority are wantonly subverted, it is incumbent on the priest, holding firmly to the precepts of the faith, to acknowledge and obey authority as being not only the necessary' safeguard of religion and society, but also the indispensable principle *of* his own sanctification. While the enemies of the name of God exert their criminal cunning to arouse and excite rebellion against the commands *of* holy mother Church, We desire to honour with a due tribute of praise and encourage with the heart *of* a father the host of sacred ministers who, because they have openly professed their Christian obedience and have maintained inviolate their fidelity to Christ and the liberty of the authority which he established, have been accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus, and not only reproach, but also persecution, prison and even death itself.

(d) Celibacy and chastity:

To ensure his emancipation from worldly cares and his complete freedom for the service of God, the Church has established the law of celibacy, whereby it might be made more and more manifest to all that he is God's minister and the father of souls. By this law the priest does not lose the office of a father; rather, he enhances it immeasurably, in that he brings forth children, not for this earthly and fleeting life, but for the life of heaven which will last for ever.

To guard the integrity of his chastity with every care as a treasure of priceless value, it is useful and indeed necessary for him to obey scrupulously the injunction of the Prince of the Apostles; which we repeat daily in the Office: Be sober and watch. . . . Watch and pray, always remembering that your hands touch most holy things,

remembering too that you arc consecrated to God and ought to serve him alone....

In this matter we consider it opportune to give you a special warning that, in directing the associations and sodalities of women you should behave as priests. Avoid all familiarity. Whenever your senice is needed, give it as sacred ministers. And in guiding those associations restrict your activity within the limits which your priestly ministry demands.

(e) Poverty:

Again and again we exhort you, beloved sons, not to love overmuch the fleeting and perishable things of this world. Set before your eyes and revere the example of the saintly men of the past and of today.... Sacred ministers, it is true, are not bound by a special vow of poverty; but they should be drawn by a love of poverty, manifesting itself in a simple and restrained way of living and in the inexpensiveness of their dwelling, and proved by their generosity to the poor. Let them particularly avoid such business transactions as would draw them from their sacred duties and lessen the regard of the faithful.

(f) Sacrifice of self:

According to the teachings of the Apostle Paul, the fundamental principle of Christian perfection may be expressed in the precept: Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ. This precept applies to all the faithful, but in a special way it binds priests. To put on Jesus Christ means to direct one's mind by his teaching. But not only that. It means also entering on a new life—a life which, if it is to shine with the splendours of Thabor, must in the first place, be made like to that of our Redeemer suffering in pain and anguish on Calvary. Such conformity undoubtedly demands hard and assiduous effort, whereby the soul becomes as it were a victim and thus intimately shares in the sacrifice of Christ. This hard and assiduous effort cannot be produced by a mere velleity; it is not limited to desires and wishes; rather it must be an earnest and unwearied activity, endeavouring to achieve a fruitful renewal of the soul. It must be an exercise of piety, referring all things to God's glory. It must be an exercise of penance, to temper and control the immoderate movements of the soul. It must be an assiduous charity, inflaming us with love for God and our neighbour, and rousing us to promote all the works of mercy. In a word, it must be an active and energetic exercise of the will, whereby we struggle and strive to attain whatever is perfect. . . .

Therefore we repeat to every priest the apostle's exhortation: Neglect not the grace of God that is in thee; which was given thee... with imposition of the hands of the priesthood. ... In all things show thyself an example of good works, in doctrine, in integrity,

in gravity, the sound words that cannot be blamed; that he who is on the contrary part may be afraid, having no evil to say of us. Beloved sons, value highly the grace of the office you have received, and so live that it may be vigorous in you and bring forth abundant fruit for the spiritual profit of the Church and the conversion of her enemies.

SECTION VII. SERMON SCHEMES

I. LITURGICAL

The Good Shepherd

The picture

At the beginning of paschal time the Church presents to us the picture of Christ, the Good Shepherd; a beautiful image which went to the hearts of the Christians of old as it goes to ours. The idea behind the Church's mind is that we should bring this allegory up to date, understand it perfectly, make it our own and correspond in some way with the ideals and designs of our Shepherd, as faithful sheep.

The consummation of the work of Christ

The liturgy of the Mass has this idea in mind. It shows us the Good Shepherd at the end of his task. We see the incarnation, redemption, resurrection and, as fruit of it all, the universal call to all mankind to partake of the supernatural benefits which he won with his blood.

(a) The collect explains it thus:

The humility of the Son of God lifted up a fallen world . . . rescued men from the perils of eternal death. Notice, the verbs are in the past, as if the work were now finished.

(b) We find the same idea in the Epistle:

You had been like sheep going astray; now, you have been brought back to him, your shepherd, who keeps watch over your souls.

Christ continues to be the Good Shepherd

No liturgical consideration can be separated long from the Eucharist, which is the centre of the Liturgy. Much less if it has for its object Christ, as has this second Sunday after Easter.

(a) He continues to be the Good Shepherd who knows his sheep and knows them intimately with a knowledge which is love.

(b) He continues to give his life for them:

i. as a sacrifice in and through which we can adore, give thanks, make satisfaction and present our petitions to the Trinity;

ii. as food in the Eucharist—the life of our life.

He leads to the heavenly fold those who are his sheep

!. The mission of Christ is to lead us to heaven (in the catacombs we see him surrounded by his sheep).

(a) For this he came into the world, suffered and died; rose again and called us.

(b) For this reason he seeks in a thousand ways the sheep which has strayed.

2. Until he has won for us the eternal glory of heaven.

(a) This season of the resurrection is one of hope.

(b) Knowing that Christ is the Good Shepherd who seeks us out our hope is increased.

We must do our share in union with the Good Shepherd

i. *Gratitude:*

(a) From Advent we have been contemplating the love of Jesus in the various mysteries.

(b) Now, when the consummation of the work of the redemption is over, he presents himself to us on the altar as if to embrace us all as the shepherd does his sheep. What more could I have done for it? (my vineyard) (Isaias 5. 4).

(c) Our reply to all this must be gratitude and generous love. We may and should say with St Paul: Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? For thy sake, says the scripture, we face death at every moment, reckoned no better than sheep marked down for slaughter. Yet in all this we are conquerors, through him who has granted us his love. Of this I am full persuaded; neither death nor life, no angels or principalities or powers, neither what is present nor what is to come, no force whatever, neither the height above us nor the depth beneath us, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which comes to us in Christ Jesus, our Lord (Rom. 8. 35-39).

2. *Fidelity:*

(a) The Good Shepherd said to the world: I am the light of the world. He who follows me can never walk in darkness; he will possess the light which is life (John 8. 12).

(b) These are the words of Christ, says the *Imitation,* by which we are admonished that we must imitate his life and manners, if we would be truly enlightened and delivered from all blindness of heart (Book 1, c. 1).

3. *Giving oneself:*

(a) From gratitude and fidelity there follows as a consequence the imitation of the way of acting of Christ. As St Peter says in the epistle, Christ died and gave us an example that we should follow in his footsteps.

(b) His way must be ours—the way of love, sorrow, suffering, patience, complete submission and handing over of the will to the commands of the Father.

(c) It must in a special way be the path trodden by all those who have responsibility for the souls of others and who thus have the rôle of shepherd thrust upon them.

He has shown us how to despise death that we may follow him; he has proposed for us the model we should follow. May we fulfil this by sacrificing ourselves in charity' for the flock, giving up our material goods, if necessary our very lives. Thus, through the former and less perfect we shall attain the latter and more perfect. And since the soul is much more precious than material goods which we may possess in an exterior manner, who will not give his inheritance for the sheep when he is already prepared to give his life for them? (St Gregory', *Hom. on the Gospel.)*

II. THE EPISTLE

The Patience of Christ

Patience

1. *The doctrine of St Thomas:*

(a) The moral virtues are directed towards good inasmuch as they safeguard the good of reason against the impulses of the passions. Now among the passions sorrow is strong to hinder the good of reason, according to 2 Cor. 7. 10: the sorrow of the world worketh death; and Ecclus. 30. 25 : Sadness hath killed many and there is no profit in it. Hence the necessity for a virtue to safeguard the good of reason against sorrow, lest reason give way to sorrow: and this patience does.

(b) Wherefore Augustine says: A man's patience it is whereby he bears evil with an equal mind, i.e. without being disturbed by sorrow, lest he abandon with an unequal mind the goods whereby he may advance to better things.

2. Therefore, patience is a virtue which, in the midst of temptation and persecution, defends us against wavering, keeping us in the line of good which we have undertaken.

There is nothing in this of mere passivity. Patience is a virtue which implies constancy and hard w'ork.

Patience and grace

1. St Thomas:

The inclination of reason would prevail in human nature in the state of integrity'. But in corrupt nature the inclination of concupiscence prevails, because it is dominant in man. Hence man is

more prone to bear evils for the sake of benefits in which concupiscence delights here and now, than to endure evils for the sake of benefits to come, which are desired in accordance with reason: and yet it is this that pertains to true patience.

2. *St Augustine:*

The strength of desire helps a man to bear toil and pain: and no one willingly undertakes to bear what is painful, save for the sake of that which gives pleasure. The reason for this is because sorrow and pain are of themselves displeasing to the soul, wherefore it would never choose to suffer them for their own sake, but only for the sake of an end. Hence it follows that the good for the sake of which one is willing to endure evils, is more desired and loved than the good the privation of which causes the sorrow that we bear patiently. Now the fact that a man prefers the good of grace to all natural goods, the loss of which may cause sorrow, is to be referred to charity, which loves God above all things. Hence it is evident that patience, as a virtue, is caused by charity, according to 1 Cor. 13. 4: charity is patient. But it is manifest that it is impossible to have charity save through grace, according to Rom. 5. 5. The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us. Therefore it is impossible to have patience without the help of grace (2-2, q. 136. a. 3. c).

3. *Summary:*

Patience as a virtue needs grace in order to be supernatural. In its fight against the lures of pleasure and concupiscence in general, reason would not be sufficient by itselff or a long time—it needs the help of grace.

St Peter exhorts to patience

1. He is speaking to slaves—and a little later he will refer to Nero's persecution:

(a) It may be God's will that we should suffer for doing right; better that, than for doing wrong (1 Pet. 3. 17).

(b) St Augustine agrees with this idea: Those are truly called patient who prefer to suffer evil so as not to commit it, rather than commit it in order not to suffer it.

(c) If you do wrong and are punished for it, your patience is nothing to boast of; it is the patience of the innocent sufferer that wins credit in God's sight (1 Pet. 2. 20).

2. Knowing the inefficacy of merely human motives, St Peter seeks to supply heavenly ones. Among these we find:

(a) The love of God:

It does a man credit when he bears undeserved ill treatment with the thought of God in his heart (1 Pet. 2. 19).

(b) Hope of eternal reward:
Credit in God's sight (v. 20).

(c) The example of Christ on which he insists (w. 21 fl'.).

The example of Christ

i. There is no motive so positive and efficacious as the example given us by Christ: Indeed, you are engaged to this by the call of Christ; he suffered for our sakes, and left you his own example; you were to follow in his footsteps (v. 21).

2. The sufferings of Christ can give us an example in many ways:
(a) in their number and atrocity;
(b) in their injustice: he did no WTong (v. 22);
(c) the patience with which he suffered all things. He spoke no evil in return, suffered and did not threaten vengeance (v. 23);
(d) on the contrary, he remits the punishment due to those who sin against him and gains many rewards for us (w. 24-25).

Applications

Are we patient as Christ was? Is our patience supernatural? May his example give us courage and may we never fail to ask God's help to be truly patient.

III. THE GOSPEL

A: Jesus, The Good Shepherd

The image in the Scriptures

1. Apart from Isaias 40. 11 and Zacharias 11. 16 the most beautiful passage with this image of the Messias is undoubtedly Ezechiel 34.

2. *In the New Testament:*
(a) Christ applies this image to himself as we see in today's Gospel.
(b) St Peter calls him the Prince of Pastors (1 Pet. 5. 4).
(c) St Paul calls him That great shepherd, whose flock was bought with the blood of an eternal covenant (Heb. 13. 20).

Three conditions for the shepherd's life

1. It is a tranquil, innocent life, free from the noise of the large cities and the delights of the world. The enjoyment of it comes from delight in simple things like those of nature.

2. The condition of their state makes them incline to love and contemplation:
(a) this the shepherd learns from nature;
(b) nature is the best school of love of God in many ways.

j. The shepherd's rule is unlike any other:

' (a) it does not consist in making laws or commands, but in feeding the sheep;

(b) it varies with occasions and circumstances; takes the individual into consideration;

(c) it is a personal government; he looks after the sheep in everything feeding, shearing, chastising, rewarding, guarding them;

(d) his whole task is to build up a flock, which shall be a unity.

Jesus—perfect fulfilment of these conditions

1. He lives a solitary, quiet life, delighting in the heavenly rather than the earthly fields. There all is perfect peace, tranquillity and order.

2. His love is without question the most attractive aspect of his life:

(a) It is everywhere and does everything—in all his works we see this love: in his birth, fife and death.

(b) The way he loves is above all comparison: not that of a mother or a wife or husband can ever hope to equal it. Before we love him he loved us; he seeks us, in spite of our sins.

3. His government is that of a true shepherd:

(a) He feeds his flock with his grace and with the efficacy of his own Spirit.

(b) The very laws he makes lead to life.

(c) He knows each one and his laws are adapted to each; for which reason we say that God's grace is not one but many. It is measured to suit each soul (1 Pet. 4. 10).

(d) It is not a dead letter, but a law of life, which leads to life.

(e) He personally looks after each one of his sheep:

i. he is the author of all their graces;

ii. he calls them, feeds them, corrects them, washes them, sanctifies them.

(f) He alone has the power to bring them into one unity which is his fold, here and in heaven.

B: Qualities of the Good Shepherd

The prophecy of Ezechiel

I. *The whole of chapter* 34 *of the Book of Ezechiel should be read today:*

(a) In it we see the harsh criticism and condemnation of the false shepherds of Israel.

(b) The flock had been perverted through the fault of these shepherds;

(c) God says that he will send, in their place, the Good Shepherd.

2. *Then the prophet describes the qualities of the Good Shepherd:*

The infidelity of the shepherds

1. They fed themselves, while neglecting the sheep.

2. Not merely did they abandon the sheep, they also governed them harshlv and with violence.

3. As a result, the sheep wandered and there was corruption in the flock:
   (a) The lack of charity in the shepherds contaminated the sheep.
   (b) The strong preyed on the weak.

The Good Shepherd

1. God says that he will raise up one shepherd for his flock, who shall be a Prince among them. All good things shall accompany his coming.

2. It is clear that this is strictly a Messianic prophecy.

Liberty and Strength

1. Christ announced solemnly that he was this Good Shepherd.

2. Implicidy there was, in this statement, a condemnation of the false shepherds of Israel, i.e. the Scribes and Pharisees.

The metaphor of the Good Shepherd

This can be applied to any kind of government, i.e. that of the State, Church or family.

But it has a special application to Church government because this should be gentle, and kind.

(a) Above all because Christ, on this occasion, stressed this quality of his Church's rule; it would be one which would know the sheep intimately; it would be a rule of love of the shepherd for the sheep; and these in their turn would follow their shepherd.

(b) For this reason it is always called pastoral government. The sign of the bishop's authority is the pastoral staff.

C: Christ, the Supreme Shepherd

Christ, his supremacy

In the Gospel of today Christ is not presented to us as one of many shepherds, but as the Supreme Shepherd. He is in a category all by himself, over all shepherds, past, present or future. The reasons may be summed up as follows.

Christ was born a shepherd

I. More than that, we may say that, before his birth, he chose to be born a shepherd.

(a) For this reason, as we see in the parable of the Good Shepherd, he left heaven and came down to earth to look for the strayed sheep.

(b) At his birth the first to adore him are shepherds—there may be a lesson in this.

2. All other shepherds are not born to that office; on the contrary, they are born to be sheep, to seek their own salvation. By free election and by grace they become shepherds later, so that by the pastoral office they may save others and also themselves.

He makes the sheep

1. Our Shepherd himself forms and makes the flock which he leads; this he does by ruling us, leading us into his flock, feeding us and creating in us that spirit of holy humility and meekness by which we belong to his flock.

2. Other shepherds guard the flock entrusted to them—but they do not make it. It is an external rule merely; by which they offer to others the means of salvation, but they cannot work on the inner heart of man as Christ does.

He dies for his sheep

1. Christ died for his sheep, and so fulfilled literally the conditions he lays down in the parable. He gives his life for each and for all. So much so that each one can say with truth: He loved me and gave his life for me (Gal. 2. 20).

2. This death has a special value which no other death could ever have.

(a) Even if all the shepherds of the Old and New Law had died for the sheep, their deaths would never have had the satisfactory value of that of Christ.

(b) In Christ however, we have all died, and his death makes satisfaction for our sins.

3. The other shepherds cannot die for their sheep in this way, nor is it necessary that they should do so.

He is at once shepherd and pasture

i. This is another characteristic of Christ:

(a) because he leads his sheep to pasture and that pasture is himself;

(b) the sheep take the shepherd into their souls by grace, they feed on him in the Eucharist and become transformed into him;

(c) by thus putting on Christ they strip themselves of what is their own.

2. Other shepherds take their food from Christ and take Christ to give him to the sheep.

He is an eternal shepherd

Other shepherds have but a temporary ministry—that of Christ is eternal.

(a) Before being born as man he fed his sheep by creating them and providing for them.

(b) He is shepherd of inanimate nature and also of the angels.

(c) After his human birth and all his life and ours he feeds his sheep:

i. with his doctrine;

ii. with his grace;

iii. with his own flesh;

(d) He is still a shepherd now that he is in heaven:

i. he still pours out his divine grace upon men—that grace which was won for us by his death;

ii. his one desire is to lead us to those same eternal pastures in heaven where we may be for all eternity with him.

D: I know mine, and mine know me

A double knowledge

Christ sums up the qualities of a Good Shepherd in the knowledge he has of his sheep and the knowledge they have of him.

How does Jesus know his sheep?

1. He knows them all and each one of them individually with a perfect knowledge:

(a) Nothing which concerns them, whether interior or exterior, misses him.

(b) He knows what is useful or harmful for each one.

(c) He knows their weaknesses and the remedies.

2. This is not a cold, intellectual knowledge, but one which is both loving and practical:

(a) He willed to suffer with us that he might know our weaknesses better.

(b) He is careful to flood with graces of all kinds the souls he loves so much, so that they may live with the supernatural life of grace within the fold of the Church.

3. So loving is this knowledge that he has given us the greatest possible proof of it in dying the most ignominious of deaths for us.

4. More than that, he has not merely given his life for us; he has also given us his life that we may live by it. As a proof and source of this life he has instituted the Sacrament of the Altar.

The sheep know Christ

j They know him because they understand the wonderful treasures he contains for them.

(a) His divinity, his perfect humanity, his wisdom and sanctity, his mercy and his love.

(b) They know his teaching and his life.

2. They know him under whatsoever form he presents himself:

(a) They know their shepherd who is present at every moment to guide them.

(b) They know him on hearing his voice as he calls them:

i. as the Samaritan woman recognized him when he made his messianic claim;

ii. as Magdalen recognized him in the garden after his resurrection on hearing him call her by name;

iii. Saul was won over by the voice of the Good Shepherd on the road to Damascus (Acts 9. 5-9).

(c) They know him through his extraordinary benefits, as did Peter after the miraculous draught of fishes (Luke 5. 8-11), and they turn to him in gratitude.

(d) They recognize him in the loving hand which chastises them: The hand of the Lord hath touched me (Job 19. 11).

3. They know him in a practical, loving knowledge:

(a) This consists primarily in the doing of God's will.

(b) It makes them lay down their lives for him or at least give themselves up to him in complete surrender, so that Christ may live and develop ever more in them.

E: By name

An intimate relationship

1. Pastoral government supposes an intimate relation between the shepherd and the flock.

(a) The shepherd satisfies all the needs of the sheep—it is rather like a matriarchal government rather than one of a father.

(b) Fray Luis de Leon says that it consists in governing according to the individual circumstances of each case—which supposes an intimate knowledge of each sheep.

2. It is intimate and loving:

(a) This is the sense that the greatest commentators have read into the word 'by name' of the Gospel story (John 10. 3). As Gregory says: As if he openly declared, I love my sheep, and they, loving me, follow me.

(b) St Thomas sees in these words a two-fold significance; familiarity and predestination.

i. *Familiarity :* because we call by name those with whom wc are on terms of intimacy and friendship. In the case of Christ this supposes a deep knowledge of the being and circumstances of each one; of what God wished them to be and of what they arc in reality—also what they can still be if they follow his call.

ii. *Predestination :* that eternal predestination by which God knows each sheep, each man, says St Thomas (in John io, *kct.* I. 3).

Theological reasons

1. God does not create man in a series, by mass production,he makes them one by one; nor are there two men exactly alike either physically or morally, nor in the circumstances of their liyes nor in their particular vocation.

2. This is really demanded by the four divine attributes which, according to the teaching of theologians, shine forth in a special way in the act of creation: i.e. wisdom, omnipotence, liberality' and mercy.

(a) Wisdom:

It is more fitting to divine wisdom that each man should be born to a special purpose in life. This indicates a more perfect conception of the divine plan and a more constant and intimate direction of human activities towards the plan God has proposed.

(b) Omnipotence:

This is manifested in a more perfect fashion in the variety' of creation, i.e. in this case, in not producing the same type of man every time. There is, however, a magnificent harmony within this variety.

(c) Liberality:

It presupposes greater generosity in God, who gives to each individual characteristics and vocation. There is no question of a mass production where God is concerned ; only that of individuals, each perfect in his own line.

(d) Mercy:

Above all, God has a special and individual love for each one in the act of creation. There is hidden here one of the most profound secrets of divine love for man.

To create is an act of mercy

i. Because God gives to one who, before, was but one of many possible creatures in his mind, concrete existence. This means that there is a special divine love for those who have been created as opposed to those individuals who will never be created, although they exist as possible objects of that act in the divine mind.

2. This special love is one which lasts all a man's life—in fact, for all eternity. It is thc love of a good shepherd for all and each one of his sheep.

Conclusion

We may sum this doctrine up in the following statements:

1. God loves each one of us with a special love. He does not love us merely as one of a crowd. Just as we stand alone before him to be judged, so we stand alone as individuals before his divine love.

2. He has created me to achieve something special in the century in which I live—something which I alone can do. He selected me from an immense number of possible men; I belong to a plan, I must occupy my special place, it is mine, and no one else's.

3. He loves me with an individual love, different from that which is given to anyone else.

4. As a practical conclusion from all this it follows that:

(a) The nearness of God should awaken love in me—he loves me, so I should love him.

(b) It should also awaken in me sentiments of true fear of God:

i. when I think of all that he hopes for from me;

ii. when I think of the graces he gives me;

iii. when I think of the fact that I might be a traitor to his cause instead of a friend.

(c) It should also give me a great calmness when I face life in all its varied circumstances:

i. it is the basis of the doctrine of the presence of God—which is also a most useful devotion;

ii. likewise it is the basis of the devotion to the present moment, i.e. doing what I have to do now, not waiting until later or wondering what is going to happen next.

(d) It should make me listen to God's inspirations, because if I have a special vocation then God will guide me towards its fulfilment.

F: The Parish Priest—a good shepherd

Continues the work of Christ

1. When Christ was preaching in Galilee he likened himself to the sower or the owner of a vineyard; he talks of wheat and cockle, of good and bad soil. In Judea, where they were more interested in pastures and sheep, Christ presents himself under the image *of* the Good Shepherd.

2. He has obviously studied the task of the shepherd; he presents his Church as a flock, with himself as the shepherd.

3. But Christ ascended into heaven. Then he left his flock in the care of other shepherds who would take his place, the Pope, the bishops and the priests. Each one of those has to live the life of Christ and be adomed with his virtues—he has to be a good shepherd.

The Parish Priest— his knowledge of the flock

1. Of him it must be said in relation to his parishioners, what was said of Christ in relation to the whole Church: I saw them born, I gave them another life, I have watched over them and fed them the bread of the catechism and the Eucharist; many times I have healed their infirmities.

(a) He knows his sheep by name—is not this the real purpose of parish visiting and its importance? He knows the strong and the weak, those who go to Mass and the sacraments, and those who do not.

(b) He knows them all and loves them all; he looks after them all with pastoral solicitude and tenderness. It may be said that he is more interested in those who do not attend church, those who try to escape from the flock.

2. Do the faithful know their pastor? Most of them yes; but others do not, because they are full of criticism for his activities and actions, lacking in fidelity and charity' towards him, harsh in their judgements of him.

The Parish Priest gives his life for the sheep

i. This fact is not given enough thought. In his daily ministry he is constantly making sacrifices for his flock; he has offered his life for them and each day a little of it is consumed in their service:

(a) In his prayer:

He is the mediator between them and God. Often they live their lives without much thought about divine things—it is the priest who makes up for this deficiency.

(b) On the day of judgement:

We shall see how many times great evils have been avoided and God's avenging hand stayed through the humble and persevering prayer of the parish priest.

(c) In his wOrk:

All that he does is for the spiritual good of the flock entrusted to him. It may be his study, catechism, instruction of converts or those about to be married; his sermons, his advice, his visits to the sick and dying, his care of the poor of the parish.

(d) His sacrifice:

Every day he offers to God the Holy Mass—and with it his own sacrifice. He has in mind all the time, if he is wise, the w'ords of Christ: Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die . . . (John 12. 24).

2. It would take too long to explain how the life of the priest is one of sacrifice, sorrow and the cross. It is a real martyrdom, but a slow one.

The gratitude of the sheep

1. The priest asks for nothing, except the good of his flock.

2. But the faithful should always show themselves grateful to him for his efforts:

(a) by praying for him, that God may guide him in his task;
(b) by speaking well of him and defending him always;
(c) by obeying his voice.

Other sheep I have

The priest may well say this; he has others in his flock who do not go to Mass or the sacraments, souls whom he loves, but who do not love either him or the parish—they are strayed sheep. These also he must bring, and in this task he should be able to count on the help of the faithful, both in the form of prayer and also in other ways.

G: The Bishop—a good shepherd

Feeding the flock

1. The bishop is the successor of the apostles and of Christ, who in the episde of today is called the bishop of souls.

2. As the apostles were sent by Christ, so is the bishop sent by the apostles.

(a) To him it is said: Be shepherds to the flock God has given you. Carry out your charge as God would have it done, cordially, not like drudges, generously, not in the hope of sordid gain; not tyrannizing, each in his own sphere, but setting an example, as best you may, to the flock (i Peter 5. 2-3).

(b) He is a shepherd who is always under submission to the Prince of Shepherds, the Pope, otherwise he would lose all authority. To say that he is a shepherd means that he has power to rule and that, like Christ, he knows his sheep and is prepared to lay down his life for them.

3. He possesses the plenitude of the priesthood, together with a power which is greater than that of the simple priest. He also has the official power of teaching the faith in his diocese.

4. To this is joined the power of ruling the diocese by making certain laws and applying certain sanctions should he think fit.

He gives his life for the sheep in a triple manner

I. By exposing himself to danger of death for the sheep if it be necessary.

2. By actually laying down his life in case of necessity.

3. By administering spiritual goods to the flock:

(a) this does not exclude his obligation of looking after their temporal welfare at times;

(b) it includes true doctrine (of which the bishop is the guardian in his diocese), the sacraments and preaching; also prayer for his flock.

The perfection of the bishop

I. He is constituted, by his consecration, in the state of perfection from the canonical point of view (cf. St Thomas, *supra*).

2. The ceremony of consecration mentions this several times:

(a) May the power of your Spirit fill him both within and without;

(b) may constancy in the faith abound in him, together with purity of love and sincerity of peace;

(c) may his word and preaching not be in vain, human language, according to mere human wisdom, but in the manifestation of the Spirit and the power of God (1 Cor. 2. 4);

(d) may your senant be faithful and prudent, placed by you, O Lord, over your family, that he may feed them and bring all men to perfection;

(e) may he be indefatigable in his tasks, fervent in spirit; may he hate pride, and love humility and truth, never departing from it through the praise of men nor through fear;

(f) pour out your blessings and your grace on him, that by your favour he may always be ready to plead for thy mercy.

Presented in the person of the bishop

(a) The cross he wears on his breast is a constant reminder that he is in the place of Christ and that he must be ready to suffer for the flock.

(b) The ring means that he has given himself as a Spouse to his diocese.

(c) The gloves he wears at Mass mean that God, through the hands of the bishop, will pour out blessings upon his people.

(d) The buskins are a symbol of the duty he has to teach the people the truths of the Gospel.

(e) The staff is a symbol of his shepherd's office.

The obedience due to him

The bishop's orders should be obeyed promptly:

(a) This is true of his commands in the moral order and also his pastoral and disciplinary laws.

(b) The faithful should also be careful to pray for their bishop frequendy.

H: The hireling

Who is he?

The Gospel seems to indicate that between the good shepherd and the bad there is a middle species—the hireling:

(a) The priest who is a hireling is not necessarily a despot or a tyrant.

(b) The characteristic of such a man is that he does not love the sheep (cf. St Augustine and St Gregory, *supra*).

(c) It may be that he does not exploit the people; in fact, he may even appear to seek their good, but from the wrong motives, i.e. for the honour which comes to him, for money, for ambitious reasons.

A triple difference

St Thomas indicates a triple difference between the shepherd and the hireling:

1. *In his intention:*

The true shepherd seeks the good of the sheep; while the hireling seeks principally his own.

2. *In the affection with which he works:*

The hireling accepts the sheep as given into his charge; while the good shepherd makes them his own by his loving solicitude.

3. *In the effects:*

The hireling flies when he sees the wolf approach; the good shepherd continues to guard the sheep, giving his life for them if need be.

A three-fold danger

1. St Thomas sums up the three ways in which the wolf can attack the flock:

(a) by diabolical temptations;
(b) by heresies;
(c) by the cruelty of tyrants.

2. We may point out that the true shepherd will not only oppose by all the means in his power the first two, but also the third attack—i.e. that of the cruelty of tyrants. We can see a perfect example of this in the Church behind the Iron Curtain.

A fourth difference

I. The good shepherd must also protect his flock against the attacks of the divine anger. This he does by means of his prayers, mortifications, his holy life and his example.

2. There is a sublime example of this in the action of Moses, the great shepherd of the Jewish race:

(a) You have sinned heinously; I will go up into the Lord's presence, and see if there is any way of winning pardon for your guilt.

(h) And so, having recourse to the Lord again, he prayed thus: Thy people have sinned heinously, in making themselves gods of gold. I entreat thee, pardon this offence of theirs; or else blot out my name too from the record thou hast written (Ex. 32. 30 ff.).

3. This action finds an echo later in the words of St Paul: It has ever been my wish that I myself might be doomed to separation from Christ if that would benefit my own brethren, my kinsmen by race (Rom. 9. 3). (That is, conditionally on God's acceptance of such an offer.)

The flight of the hireling

1. The text refers rather to a spiritual flight than to a material one.

2. With regard to actual physical flight, there are times when it may be necessary, for the good of the flock. Thus Paul fled from Damascus; Gregory from Constantinople; St John Chrysostom, St Athanasius. These are not sinful flights, as the Gospel proves, because Jesus himself fled to the other side of the Jordan to escape the Jews (John 10. 39-40).

3. *Spiritualflight:*

(a) The hireling runs away spiritually:

i. when he does not pray;

ii. when he keeps silent on those occasions when he should speak out;

iii. when he does not reprove.

(b) When he does not pray:

i. St Gregory in the *Regula Pastoralis,* says that only God can free the flock from the savage wolf which is always lying in wait for them.

ii. God pays special heed to the prayer of the shepherd. And when he does not pray it is equivalent to leaving the flock—it is a flight.

(c) When he keeps silent:

A theme which is fully developed by St Augustine, and which will be the subject of a special scheme later.

(d) When he does not reprove:

i. The prophet Ezechiel says: What did you to restore the fortunes of the day, when the Lord's stroke fell? Not for you to man the breach, to throw up a wall about Israel! (Ez. 13. 5).

ii. The sacred author is referring to those prophets who did not put up a bold front against the sins and excesses of the people, who did not reprove those who gave public scandal and the strong ones of the land, by menacing them with the rigours of divine justice.

iii. In this matter Elias was a model shepherd.

The hireling is useful

1. *He has to be tolerated:*

St Augustine puts it all in one concise phrase: we must flee from the wolf, praise the shepherd and tolerate the hireling.

2. *What is it St Patil says?*

One and all have their own interest at heart, not Christ's (Phil. 2. 21).

It saddens the shepherd's heart to see the hireling among the flock; but still, so long as Christ be preached (and the hireling does preach him at times) the shepherd is glad. Listen to St Paul again: and most of the brethren are making bold to preach God's word with more freedom than ever. Some of them, it is true, for no better reason than rivalry or jealousy. . . . What matter, so long as, either way, for private ends or in all honesty, Christ is proclaimed ?

3. *Christ has already given us an example:*

The Scribes and Pharisees have established themselves in the place from which Moses used to teach; do what they tell you, then, continue to observe what they tell you, but do not imitate their actions, for they tell you one thing and do another (Matt. 23. 2-3).

(a) Many in the Church seek material prosperity; nevertheless, they do preach Christ and through them the voice of Christ is heard.

(b) Then the sheep follow, not the hireling, but the voice of the shepherd, coming to them through the hireling (St Augustine).

Conclusion

1. The hireling is necessary in the Church; but it is a sad office.

(a) He receives his reward here, as the day labourer. He cannot hope for an eternal reward, for that is the inheritance reserved for the sons of God.

(b) The fruit of the hireling is always inferior to that of the shepherd.

2. The shepherds, on the other hand, preach by word and also by example. They preach in spirit and in truth.

(a) The Church of God needs true shepherds who will preach with love. Only such as these will renew the face of the earth. Did not Satan himself confess that four such as the Cure d'Ars would have converted France ?

(b) The hirelings should be afraid, not merely that their fruit might be less than it should be, but also that it may fail altogether or even be evil, causing harm because of their lack of spirit and their lives, which are often not edifying.

(c) All preachers should know by heart this passage from St John of the Cross.

i. Let those who think to cover the whole world with their preaching remember this, that the Church of God would profit more and that they themselves would be more pleasing to God, were they to spend half that time with God in prayer, even though they may not thus reach such a high place here.

ii. Then they would certainly do more and with less effort through one action than through a thousand, since their prayers would merit it and their spiritual power would be greater; because otherwise it is nothing but beating the air, doing less than nothing, perhaps even harm.

iii. May God free you from ever allowing the salt to lose its savour, because in that case, it may appear to be doing something from the outsider's point of view, but in reality it will be nothing, since it is certain that good works can only be done through the power of God.

I: The hireling's silence

1. *St Augustine comments:*

A modern commentator has said that St Augustine's treatise on St John reminds him of the flight of one eagle pursuing another, so profound is it.

2. One of the most profound chapters of St John is the tenth, which contains the story of the good shepherd.

3. *The silence of the hireling:*

He runs away when he is silent.

(a) This flight is perhaps the most grave in the Church of God. That of the priest who saves his life from danger is not worse than this, since in some circumstances it might be allowed, or even be the right thing.

(b) The flight which has done most harm to the Church is that of the priest who should speak but who keeps silent.

4. *Silence is flight:*

St Augustine says so clearly: On keeping silent you fled; you kept silent through fear; fear is the flight of the soul. Present in body, your soul fled.

5. *The sin of silence:*

St Augustine gives his analysis of this point in *De Civ. Dei*, bk. 1, ch. 9.

(a) God sometimes chastises the good in time of great calamities, because although they may not be evil, they are still not without some guilt.

(b) The reason is that they do not deal with the proud, impure and misers in the way they deserve. They hide their sins, do not reprove or correct them.

6. *They observe this sinful silence:*

(a) because it is a nuisance to have to correct such people;

(b) they do not wish to offend them to their faces;

(c) to avoid making possible enemies of them.

7. The Saint points out that when prudence or charity prompt the lack of reproof such conduct is praiseworthy.

8. *A more culpable silence:*

(a) The above-mentioned remarks apply to all Christians, since all have the obligation of administering correction at times.

(b) The obligation is a grave one in the case of those w'ho are set over others in a position of authority, such as directors, priests and prelates.

(c) Because for this very purpose they have been appointed guardians over the flock.

9. *A text of St Teresa:*

(a) The saints have always lamented the fact that some preachers allow the dangers of the world to pass by uncorrected, without even warning the people about them. They lack courage in their preaching for fear of offending the rich, the powerful, or for fear of making enemies among their audience.

(b) St Teresa says:

... it is no longer the fashion to talk in this way; even preachers nowadays phrase their sermons so as not to give offence. No doubt their intention is good, and the work they do is good, too, but they lead few people to amend their lives. How is it that there are not many who are led by sermons to forsake open sin? Do you know what I think? That it is because preachers have too much worldly wisdom. They are not like the Apostles, flinging it all aside and catching fire with the love of God; and so their flame gives little heat.... Does your Reverence know what our great care ought to be? To hold our life in abhorrence and to consider our reputation as quite unimportant. Provided we say what is true and maintain it to the glory of God, we ought to be indifferent whether we lose everything or gain everything (*Life*, ch. 16).

10. Is it because of this sinful silence that the strong social line of the Popes (such as that Leo of XIII and Pius XI) has not been followed with any great success?

ii. Let us resolve never to fall into this sin, but to preach the truth in season and out of season, without fear.

J: The Parish

This Sunday is set aside by Catholic Action as Parish Sunday

1. It is done to make all the faithful realize that they have a definite obligation as members of the parish.

2. Juridically the Church is a family, although at the same time it is often called a monarchy, with the Pope as King. However, the family side of the Church needs to be stressed—and the family in this case is the parish as the prime unity of Church and State.

We can see this idea stressed in the prayers for Good Friday, when the Church asks God's help and protection 'for this, thy family'.

The family concept

i. A family is a group united in community of blood, who five together in the same home, under the authority of the father or head of the family.

2. From this community spirit is derived:
(a) the mutual love of the members;
(b) the necessity of collaboration for the common good;
(c) the organic constitution of this unity under the leadership of the head of the family.

These same elements found in the parish

1. *Community of blood:*
The blood of Christ, through his grace, flows through the souls of all the faithful, because they have all received it from their common mother, the Church, through the same source, the sacrament of baptism.

J

2. *A common home, the parish Church:*
Here they are born (in baptism), they are fed (with the Eucharist), they live their social lives (through matrimony), they are attended when sick (extreme Unction)—they live and die.

3. *One authority, the parish priest under their bishop:*
This is especially true when he is motivated by the love for his people which is demanded of a good shepherd as opposed to the hireling.

4. *As a consequence:*
It follows that the faithful should have real charity towards one another and towards their parish priest.
(a) This is the first great advantage of a life which is truly parochial.

(b) The people should also get to know each other and have a threat spirit of mutual help and charity, especially towards converts (who often complain that they never get to know their fellow Catholics in the parish), and strangers.

5. They should all collaborate towards the common good.

(a) This includes every type of parish and diocesan activity, both temporal and spiritual.

(b) It should be an organized effort—not an aimless affair.

(c) It should be a truly common effort, not something left to the select few.

6. The priests should do everything possible to create this spirit of unity in the parish, based on the type and analogy of the good shepherd and his united flock. Let them be one!

K: Obligation of the apostolate

The suffering, and the hope of Christ

1. The Gospel of today's Mass ends with some words of Christ which are full of sadness and hope at the same time: I have other sheep, too, which do not belong to this fold; I must bring them in too; they will listen to my voice: so there will be one fold, and one shepherd (John 10. 16).

2. *Christ is sad:*

(a) at the thought of the great multitude which does not so far belong to his fold, the Church;

(b) at the thought of the many Catholics who are like sheep gone astray, seeking all their pleasures in creatures instead of in the divine pastures which he left for them;

(c) and all because the voice of the shepherd has never reached them with its full force and efficacy.

3. At the same time, there is hope in his statement, too, that one day all will enjoy the abundant life to be found only in his fold.

4. The duty of carrying the voice of the shepherd throughout the whole world is one which does not merely fall on the shoulders of bishops, priests and missionaries—it is the obligation of all Christians.

The duty of charity towards others

i. The obligation of the apostolate comes primarily from the other obligation of charity towards our neighbour.

(a) We must love our neighbour as ourselves; but no one loves himself truly unless he is careful to procure his salvation. In the same way, true love for our neighbour implies that we desire and work for his eternal salvation.

(b) Pius XI : He who loves God can do no less than wish that all should love him, and he who truly loves his neighbour can do no less than eamestlv desire and work for his eternal salvation. In this principle, as on its foundation, rests the apostolate, because it is nothing but the due exercise of Christian charity which binds all men *(Letter to Argentine Bishops).*

(c) It is necessary to love one's neighbour, as St John says: by the true test of action, not by taking phrases on our lips (i John 3.18). It is clear that it is not enough to admit in words that all should be brought to salvation; all Christians have the obligation, according to their state of life, to bring the effective means of salvation to others.

2. There is an explicit command to do this :

(a) by which each one must have care for his brother (Ecclus. 17. 12);

(b) St Peter says: Make one another free of what is yours ungrudgingly, sharing with all whatever gift each of you has received, as befits stewards of a God so rich in graces (1 Pet. 4. 10);

(c) no one must bury the talent he has received, instead he must work with it and make it bear fruit unless he wishes to be classed as a wicked and unprofitable servant (Matt. 25. 26);

(d) this parable has special application to supernatural talents, and they should bear fruit in our own lives and also in those of others.

The duty of love for the Church

1. There is a glaring and a shining example of this love—in Jesus, who gave everything for his Church.

2. *In the same way:*

(a) There is a general obligation to the apostolate : all, no matter what their station in life and their powers, should co-operate in the increase and beautifying of the Mystical Body of Christ.

(b) Those who belong to Catholic Action groups or to other associations within the Church should realize to the full their special obligation in this matter.

(c) Pius XII: And we must not omit here to mention parents, to whom our Saviour has entrusted the most tender members of his Mystical Body. We urgently implore them, for the love of Christ and his Church, to watch most carefully over the children committed to their charge, and to forewarn them against the manifold snares which today may so easily entrap them. . . .

In this grave hour . . . when pain is racking so many bodies and sorrow rending so many hearts, the world must be enkindled to this supernatural charity, so that all good men (We have in our thoughts especially members of charitable organizations of every kind) may pool their resources to meet these gigantic spiritual and material

needs in an admirable competition of pity and love. . . . We wish this to be especially realized—as in fact to their honour it is realized—by those militant members of Catholic Action who are co-operating with bishops and priests in the work of the apostolate . . . It is evident that under present conditions this untiring activity of theirs is of the first and highest importance *(Mystici Corporis)*.

A duty inherent in our spiritual lives

1. *An obligation arising from baptism:*

This is the sacrament which gave us spiritual re-birth and which made us members of Christ's Church. By it we have sown in us the seed of the apostolate, each in his own circumstances of life.

2. *Obligations of confirmation:*

By it we are made soldiers of Christ—and it is the soldier's duty to fight and to suffer fatigue for the cause.

3. Such apostolate is not a merely natural tendency to activity—it is the immediate result of a truly well developed spiritual life.

4. Finally it is inherent in our own spiritual lives: because these will not be fully developed without such an apostolate. We shall, if we are truly spiritual, seek for and work for the spread of the Church.

5. Finally, Catholics need to be reminded that one form of this apostolate has been very neglected—namely, the taking of public office by Catholics. We are not represented as we should be in the running of the country mainly because we are not interested—yet we should be. There is a great opportunity for Catholics to fight the Church's cause in the Unions, in professional organizations, in Parliament and on local councils.

6. Pius XII: The relations between the Church and the world demand the presence of lay apostles. The consecration of the world is, in its essence, the task of laymen, of men who are intimately involved in economic and social life, who take part in government and in legislative assemblies. Likewise Catholic 'Cells', which must be created among workers, in each factory and in each place of work, to bring back to the Church those who are separated from her, can only be constituted by the workers themselves (Address to the second world congress of the Lay Apostolate, 1957).

Third Sunday after Easter

YOUR DISTRESS SHALL BE TURNED INTO JOY

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: i Peter 2. 11-19 Gospel: John 16. 16-22

Texts which refer to joy

i. *fVe should rejoice:*

Great was the slaughtering of victims that day, and greatly they rejoiced, women and children with the rest, at the signal mercy the Lord had shown them; such a cry of triumph went up from Jerusalem as was heard far away. 2 Esdras 12. 42.

Let the wicked vanish as smoke vanishes, consumed by God's presence, as the wax melts at the presence of fire, while honest men keep holiday and rejoice at the sight of him, glad and content. Ps 67. 3-4. (Cf. Ps. 31. it.)

While thou art young, take thy fill of manhood's pride, let thy heart beat high with youth, follow where thought leads and inclination beckons, but remember that for all this God will call thee to account. Eccles. 11. 9.

Joy be with you always. Never cease praying. 1 Thess. 5. 16-17.

2. *The joy of the just man:*

Dawn of hope for the innocent, dawn of gladness for honest hearts ! Rejoice and triumph, just souls, in the Lord, of his holy name publish everywhere the renown. Ps. 96. 11-12.

Thou hast turned my sadness into rejoicing; thou hast undone the sackcloth I wore, and girded me about with gladness. Ps. 29. 12. Cf. Ps. 30. 8; 50. 10.

To fear the Lord is man's pride and boast, is joy, is a prize proudly worn; comfort it brings to the heart, happiness and content and a long life bestows. Ecclus. 1. 11-12.

The kingdom of heaven is not a matter of eating or drinking this or that; it means rightness of heart, finding our peace and our joy in the Holy Spirit. Rom. 14.17.

Whereas the spirit yields a harvest of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness. . . . Gal. 5. 22.

Joy to you in the Lord at all times; once again I wish you joy. Phil. 4. 4.

And if we are writing to you now, it is so that joy may be yours in full measure. 1 John 1. 4. Cf. 2 John 12.

y Joy m eternal salvation:

So, rejoicing, you shall drink deep from the fountain of deliverance. ... Sing in honour of the great deeds the Lord has done, make them known for all the world to hear. Isaias 12. 3-5. Cf. Isaias 26. 1, 35· I0› 65· M·

When that day comes, rejoice and exult over it; for behold a rich reward awaits you in heaven. Luke 6. 23.

But you, instead of rejoicing that the devils are made subject to you, should be rejoicing that your names are enrolled in heaven. Luke 10. 20.

4. Joy *in times ofpersecution:*

Be glad and light-hearted, for a rich reward awaits you in heaven; so it was they persecuted the prophets before you. Matt. 5. 12.

And they left the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been found worthy to suffer indignity for the sake of Jesus' name. Acts 5. 41.

I care nothing for all that; I do not count my life precious compared with my work, which is to finish the course I run, the task of preaching which the Lord Jesus has given me, in proclaiming the good news of God's grace. Acts 20. 24.

Nay, we are confident even over our afflictions, knowing well that affliction gives rise to endurance, and endurance gives proof of our faith, and a proved faith gives ground for hope. Rom. 5. 3-4.

Even as I write I am glad of my sufferings on your behalf, as in this mortal frame of mine, I help to pay off the debt which the afflictions of Christ leave still to be paid, for the sake of his body, the Church. Col. 1. 24.

You showed your sympathy with those who were in bonds; and when you were robbed of your goods you took it cheerfully, as men who knew that a higher, a more lasting good was yours. Heb. 10. 34·

SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LITURGICAL

A: The Introit

It comes from Psalm 65, a hymn of triumph which reminds us of the Introit for the feast of the Epiphany. Shout with joy to God, all the earth, Alleluia, sing ye a psalm to his name; give glory to his praise. The Offertory and the Alleluia versicle are also part of this general joy at the thought of Easter.

13: The Epistle and Gospel

During this part of Paschal time the Church takes the Epistles of the Mass from those which are known as the canonical epistles, while the readings from the Gospels are taken from Christ's discourse at the Last Supper. The infant Church was grouped about St Peter in the Upper Room, while St Paul was not destined to preach the gospel until after Pentecost. The Last Supper discourse contains what may be called the last will and testament of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a summan· of his death, resurrection, ascent to his Father and the coming of the Holy Spirit. From this Sunday onwards the epistles and gospels are an excellent preparation for the coming of the Holy Ghost. Pentecost, like Christmas and Easter, is a milestone in the liturgical cycle, but one which has no fixed penitential preparation, such as Advent and Lent. The wisdom of the Church has made up for this in the liturgy of these Sundays after Easter.

The Epistle outlines for us a programme of Christian living which, if it is put into practice, will prepare us better than anything else for the coming of the Paraclete. The Collect sums it up. In it the Church reminds us of the sublimity of the Christian vocation and of the high degree of sanctity required of us who profess the name of Christ, while the Secret reminds us of one of the most important effects of Holy Communion, which extinguishes within us all worldly desires and inflames the heart with a love for heavenly things, a longing for the true joys of heaven.

II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

A: The Epistle: i Peter 2. 11-19

The theme is the struggle which will always exist between the ideals of the Christian and those of the world. From the very beginning the accusations made against the Church have been contradictory, on the one hand the Christian moral code and its attacks against sin earned for the faithful the name of enemies of the human race; on the other hand they were accused of the most terrible vices and crimes. They refused to treat the Roman emperor as a God and stood aloof from the religious activity of the pagans. However, the calumny of rebellion was laid to their charge probably through the evil urgings of the devil and the world; both enemies of Christ. This situation will always exist, and therefore the advice given by the Prince of the Apostles will also have a universal application.

In verses 11-12 he urges all Christians to live an honest life in order to remove all cause for the first accusation and to pre-dispose the minds of the pagans to receive the grace of God whenever it should be granted to them. Verses 13-17 deal with obedience to

lawful authority and since this has a practical application in the case of slaves, the last verses are addressed to them.

The Text

i. An honest life:

We have already mentioned one reason why St Peter urges this on Christians, but it is not the only reason. The difference between those who are worldly and those who are not consists in the fact that the former regard this earth as their definitive home, living in accordance with this opinion; while those who are Christ's consider themselves to be mere pilgrims, making their way towards their real dwelling place in heaven. Therefore they must fight tooth and nail against the desires of the flesh. (Cf. Gal. 5. 16-17; Eph. 2. 3; Rom. 7. 22-23; James 4. 1.)

2. *Authority:*

The apostle is dealing here with human authority, as derived from that of God. If we remember that the emperor at the time was Nero we can see what a lesson this must have been!

3. *Liberty:*

After the parenthesis of verse 15 St Peter adds that they should obey as free men, that is as those who do not obey from mere fear of punishment, but who submit their wills to that of God, in this case as it is found in all lawful authority. However, this liberty (even from the law of Moses) must not be interpreted as an excuse for wrong-doing, because they are subject to the new law of Christ. Verse 19, which the liturgy uses to close these ideas, really belongs to the passage which follows.

4. *The lesson:*

First of all obedience to lawful authority, then the need to live exemplary lives to give good example to those who see us and judge us as Catholics.

B: The Gospel: John 16. 16-22

The occasion

The profound solemnity of Our Lord's discourse at the Last Supper, its theme and the promise of consolation through the coming of the Holy Ghost make this passage a suitable one for the Gospels of the Sundays after Easter, in preparation for the Ascension and Pentecost.

The historical occasion of this discourse is well known. Judas has left the Upper Room and in a torrent of words the Master speaks from his heart. Perhaps that is why the discourse appears disjointed at times. The main ideas are clear, however. He announces his departure (at the end of chap. 13 from v. 31); he encourages his

followers by making them understand that his journey to his Father will have many advantages for them (chap. 14). Ele tells them to remain united in him as the branches of the vine. They are united with him in the persecution which is now directed against him and they are his friends. The Holy Ghost will give them the victory and will change their sorrow at his departure into joy (chap. 15). Faith, charity' and hope are the main ideas in the various chapters of the discourse. The passage we are dealing with today falls into the second class, the motives for hope.

The Text

I. *After a little while . . .* **(v. 16):**

To what departure and return do these phrases apply? There is division of opinion on the subject. The departure must refer to his death; but the return? For some 'after a little while you will have sight of me' refers to the forty days after the resurrection; but in that case how are we to understand the phrase in verse 23: When that day comes, you will not need to ask anything of me? especially since, if this opinion is true, the whole phrase in verse 16 refers to the days during which Our Lord instructed his apostles in their duties. According to Maldonatus the phrase should be interpreted of the day of judgement, which is a little while in the sight of God, to whom a thousand years are as but a day. In that case it is difficult to see the real meaning of the prayers which it is said that the Father will hear on that day (v. 23).

Possibly it is a mistake to try to divide and classify too much in the case of this final discourse of Christ. The general meaning would seem to be that he is about to die and leave them for a while, but it will be only for a very' short time, because after three days he will rise again and they will then have complete faith in him because of the fact. They will see him and rejoice with a joy which no one shall take from them. They will also receive the consolation of the Holy Spirit who will enlighten their minds as to the mysteries he will teach them during those forty' days. They will not then need to ask any questions and the Father will answer all their prayers. The joy of which Our Lord speaks will thus apply to all the events which took place after the resurrection.

The phrase 'because I am going back to the Father' in verse 16 does not appear in the Greek texts and it is possibly a transference from verse 17 due to a copyist's error.

2. *Some of his disciples said . . .* (v. 17):

They did not understand our Lord's words, first of all because they were in themselves obscure, but also because they could not yet bring themselves to believe that he would die. Their very sadness at this moment would not make for ready understanding

3. *You will weep and lament. . .* (v. 20).

‘ The real theme of this passage is to be found in these verses. The world rejoices for those very reasons which make the apostles sad ; but later this sadness shall be turned into joy and the joy of the world, if it does not turn into tears of true penance, will become weeping and gnashing of teeth.

St Augustine explains what is meant by thc world. It is not the earth on which we live but those people who, putting their final end in earthly things, take no notice of God and heavenly things. This world hates Christ and will bring him to his death, thinking that, once this has been accomplished, the whole matter of his doctrine and life is settled. Later the same world will try to trap his followers, because these, through their lives and example, will show up the false teachings of the world. We may sum this up by saying that the world here means those who, tempted by the devil, set their treasure and hearts on worldly things, forgetting that the final end of man is not in this life but in the next.

The present Holy Father, in his address to Italian Catholic Action (12 Oct. 1952) points out that the programme of the world is aimed at the complete disintegration of all moral, social and intellectual truth in the Mystical Body of Christ. It seeks for nature without grace, reason without faith, liberty without authority—at times even authority without liberty. An economy without God, politics without God, law without God—these are the real reasons why the world is threatened with new and more terrible wars. This enemy is trying to bring about such a state of affairs that Christ will be a stranger in the universities, schools, the family and the administration of justice and the hearts of nations, where peace or war are decided. This enemy is corrupting the world through the press and the cinema in such a way as to kill chastity in youth, destroy love between husband and wife while developing an exaggerated nationalism which leads to war.

4. *You will weep . . .*

Now because of my death ; later because of persecution.

5. *Your distress shall be turned into joy . . .*

Now by my resurrection; later by the thought of eternal life.

6. *A woman . . .* (v. 21):

The example is plain, as is its meaning. Everything which is destined to bear fruit costs an effort, but the effort is compensated for by the fruit which is produced. This is true of the resurrection, of glory and also of the apostolate.

7. *I will see you again . . .* (v. 22):

The phrase implies God’s good-pleasure and benevolence towards us · therefore in this sense it is better to be seen by God than to see him.

Moral reflections

1. *The loss of Christ:*

The union between the apostles and Christ was no more perfect or intimate (in spite of being physical) than is ours through grace. He dwells in us, possesses us and loves us. But how they wept because he was lost to them for a time and how little we care at times if we lose him through mortal sin. By God's grace—if it should happen to us—it will be but for a short time.

Sometimes we are sad because he withdraws his consolations from us in time of prayer. This is a sign of the imperfection of our love, because he has only hidden himself; he has not really left us alone. Consolation in prayer is not really necessary and is usually a passing thing.

2. *Hope:*

Lift up your heads and look at the things which are above! The causes of our hope are the fidelity of God to the promises he has made to us (Heb. 12. 24; John 17. 26); the goodness of the Father and the knowledge that Christ is our mediator with God. Its effects are to enable us to suffer with patience the tribulations of this life and those of death itself; to encourage us to do all for God. It is the anchor in the tempest of tribulation and sorrow.

3. *You will weep and lament:*

The sad joys of the world compared with the joyful sadness of the true Christian.

1. *The joys of the world are:*

(a) frivolous and dangerous:
Resist those natural appetites which besiege the soul (1 Pet. 2.11);

(b) of short duration (Ps. 101. 4);

(c) are liable to lead to eternal unhappiness.

2. *The sadness of the true Christian is:*
(a) salutary—caused by sadness for sin and the loss of Christ;
(b) accompanied frequently by consolations of another kind;
(c) followed in the next life with a joy which no man can take from us (John 16. 20).

3. The trials and sufferings of this world are a grace from God. They serve to teach us true wisdom:
(a) They make us reflect more seriously on the true destiny of man.
(b) Through them we appreciate more the things of heaven and give their true value to the things of this world.
(c) They assure for us the way to salvation.

(d) They arc a school of virtue in so far as:

i. they teach us to pay our debts to divine justice here and now;

ii. they free us from many dangers which threaten the soul;

iii. they help us to merit a rich reward in heaven.

4. If we wish to possess this joy always then we must learn to live in accordance with Christ's teachings:

(a) We must cure the wounds of our soul and keep it pure, free from sin.

(b) We must be content with what is necessary, and not seek always that which is superfluous; we must limit our desires, being satisfied if we have good health and sufficient income to keep us in a moderate state of life.

(c) We must learn to avoid dangerous companions and occasions of sin, being careful to choose our friends well.

(d) We must put up with the human defects of those around us without demanding too much of others.

(e) We must support the trials and difficulties which come to us from the hands of God, seeking in him our true consolation.

(f) We must think frequently about his goodness, his love for men, the redemption of Christ, the glory which will one day be ours.

SECTION III. THE FATHERS

I. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM*

1. *True joy:*

I notice that many are joyful because the time of fasting is half over. What is even more interesting is to discover if we have finished with half our sins, the one object of this mortification. If we had this thought always in mind then we would always be joyful in accordance with St Paul's words : joy to you in the Lord at all times; once more I wish you joy. . . . All seek happiness. For this purpose the merchant seeks money in the course of his travels; for the same reason the soldier fights; but not all know where true happiness is to be found.

Not in riches, certainly, because unhappiness can overtake the rich as easily, if not more easily, than the poor. Not health, because there are many healthy people who wish they were dead rather than suffer their present miseries. Not honour, because the highest of all human honours, that of royalty, implies as many motives for sadness as there are honours to be found in it. There are worries of all kinds, wars from without and from within. Cares weigh the monarch down like the waves on the sea.

* Taken largely from the 18th and 4th *Homilies on Images.*

2. Nothing can disturb the pence of the just tnan:

\\ hat can disturb the holy man ? Death ? He desires it as a reward. The premature death of his children ? This also he overcomes with courage, repeating the words of Job: The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away (Job i. 21). Insults? Christ taught us how to suffer them. Blessed are you when men revile you, and persecute you, and speak all manner of evil against you falsely, because of me (Matt. 5. 11). Illness? Not that either, because you must have heard the counsel of the Scriptures: Accept all that comes to thee, patient in sorrow, humiliation long enduring; for gold and silver the crucible, it is in the furnace of humiliation men show themselves worthy of his acceptance (Ecclus. 2. 4).

3. *The true purpose of sadness:*

Sadness has been created, not for the loss of money, nor for death, nor that we may mourn the loss of anything like that, but so that we may be able to wipe out our sins by the right use of it—a thing which I shall prove to you by a clear example. Medicines are provided each to cure certain diseases; for example, there is a certain medicine which is destined for the cure of diseases of the eye and has no application in other illnesses. Everyone will say that such a medicine has been made for the cure of diseases of the eye and not for the stomach, for the hands, or for any other part of the body. Let us apply this consideration to sadness and we shall find that it does not help us in any of the things that happen to us and that its only use is to wipe away our sins. Therefore it is quite certain that it has been created for this purpose. Let us see how sadness does not help us. Have you been fined. You are sad, and the fine does not disappear. Have you lost a child? You are in sorrow, but your child does not rise again from the dead nor does your sorrow help at all. Someone falls ill. He is sad ; yet the illness is not cured, even perhaps it becomes worse. . . . Has anyone sinned ? He is sorry, and his sin is wiped out. He has paid the debt. ... For which reason St Paul says: Supernatural remorse leads to an abiding and salutary change of heart (2 Cor. 7.10).

II. ST BASIL

(St. Basil's profound and magnificent teaching on Christian joy can be found throughout his works).

1. *Spiritual joy: the teaching of St Paul:*

You have heard those words of the Apostle to the Thessalonians, in which he lays down, a universal law, proclaiming the doctrine of Christ to all those who wish to follow him. But the benefits of this teaching will be extended to all men until the end of the world. Joy be with you always; never cease praying. Give thanks upon all

occasions; this is what God expects of you all in Christ Jesus (1 Thess. 5. 16-18). Later I shall explain to you, as far as I can, in what this joy consists and the benefits which can be drawn from it; how one can remain constantly in prayer and how God can be praised in all things.

2. *Joy because of our union with God:*

Yet I have been ordered to give thanks at all times and for all things. Should I therefore give thanks when I am tortured, wounded or on the rack? or when they put out my eyes?... What shall we answer to all this? We must reply that the Apostle has another view point, trying to lift up our souls from this earth to heaven to make us live a heavenly life. Our enemies have not understood the mind of the lawgiver, instead they continue to be preoccupied with earthly things, those of the flesh, soaking themselves in the bodily appetites like worms in the mud. Therefore they ask if it is possible for man to fulfil this command of the Apostle. . . . The soul which is possessed of the desire for its Creator and which has grown accustomed to delighting in his divine presence and beauty will never lose that ineffable delight in the midst of such carnal desires; on the contrary, he will find more delight and happiness in these things which molest others. Thus lived the Apostle; who, rejoicing in the midst of his infirmities, sickness, persecutions and calamities, considered poverty to be a glory (2 Cor. 12. 9-10). When he was afflicted by hunger, thirst, cold, nakedness or persecutions—all those things which make others hate themselves, and even life itself—he rejoiced in them.

y Joy through hope:

The valiant athlete, once he has stripped for the fight in the arena of his religion, should suffer with courage the blows which he will receive from his enemies, safe in the hope of the glory of his prize. All who, in the course of the games, have accustomed themselves to the fatigue of the struggle, never lose heart because of the pain of the blows they receive; on the contrary, the desire for victory triumphs over their present ills and they attack their enemy closely. In the same way the just man, even though he be attacked by some evil, never loses his joy, because: affliction gives rise to endurance, and endurance gives proof of our faith, and a proved faith gives ground for hope (Rom. 5. 4). For the same reason St Paul urges us to be patient in time of tribulation and to rejoice with hope (Rom. 12. 12). It is hope then which renders our joy stable in the hearts of those who are proved in virtue.

4. *The second problem—How to unite tears and joy:*

The apostle also tells us that we must weep with them that weep, and again he himself wept for the enemies of the cross of Christ. Nor is it really necessary to mention the case of Jeremias. . . . Jesus

himself wept over Jerusalem and at the tomb of Lazarus; he also said that those who mourn are blessed. How can all this be reconciled with the command that we should rejoice always (t Thess. 5. 16)?

We may reply by saying that the lamentations and tears of the saints come from the love of God. They have their eyes always fixed on the Beloved, finding in him their greatest joy; therefore they attend to the affairs of their brethren, weeping for them when they sin and reproving and correcting them with their tears. But just as those who stand on the shore and worry about those who are drowning do not thereby lose their sense of security, so those who weep for the sins of their neighbours do not lose their own joy. Rather this is increased at the thought that their very' tears make them more worthy of the joy of the Lord. Therefore those who are sad are also happy and those who mourn are blessed, because they shall receive consolation and their very' sorrow shall be turned into joy.

m. ST CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA

Christian hope: a little while . . .

Not understanding his words, the chosen apostles comment with each other on the meaning of this phrase, a little while, and they even begin to doubt the words, You shall not see me. Christ anticipates their desire to question him, showing them once more that as God he knows their hearts and what is taking place within them, even what is in the depths of their souls, as if it were uttered by their tongues. For what, may I ask, can be hidden from him before whom all things are naked ? Wherefore, speaking by one of his prophets, he says: Who is this that concealeth counsel, and holdeth words in his heart, thinking to conceal them from me (Job 42. 3)? Truly he helps them by every' means in his power, putting before them the opportunity and making himself the fosterer within them of a lively and steadfast faith. . . .

In response to their eagerness to know what the words of the Saviour might mean he speaks to them more openly of his passion. . . . And it was not to make them sad that he told them these things, but that, by this knowledge, they might be prepared and strengthened against the fear that would assail them. For an attack whose coming is awaited is not as severe as one which is wholly unexpected. . . .

While the worldlings are doing and saying such things, you, he says to them, shall lament, but you will not endure this for long, because your sorrow will be turned into joy. I shall rise again and I shall remove from you all cause for sorrow, putting an end to your tears and calling you to unending joy of soul. For the joy of the blessed is without end, since Christ lives for ever and the death of all men has been undergone through him. But it is right to keep in mind that worldly men in their turn will suffer eternal affliction.

For if through the death of Christ in the flesh his disciples were filled with sorrow, and because of the same cause of their grief the world rejoiced; since death and sorrow arc now overcome in the risen Saviour, the mourning of the just is turned into joy, while the joy of the worldling is changed into sorrow. . . .

For this same reason your suffering shall not be without reward; for you shall rejoice when you sec the wonderful Guest born a child into this world, incorruptible and indestructible. He is, of course, speaking of himself. For he says that everlasting and indestructible shall be the joy in him. . . . Ever-enduring, therefore, is the joy that comes from him, and with good cause. For if Christ's death has brought us sadness, who shall take our joy from us, we who know that he now lives and shall so remain without end, the Prince and the giver of spiritual good things. From the holy no man takes joy away, according to the words of our Lord; but it was immediately taken away from those who nailed him to the cross. His suffering ended, they must inevitably suffer grief who believed that because of it they would be happy.

IV. THE VENERABLE BEDE

I will see you again:

These words of the Lord apply to all the faithful, who strive amid the tears and pain of this present life to reach eternal joy. With good reason they lament and weep with sorrow in this present life, for they are not yet able to see him whom they love. They know that, as long as they are in this mortal body, wanderers from their true country they must be, and from their own people. They doubt not that it is through hard work and struggle that they must reach their crown. Their sorrow shall be turned into joy when, once the contest of this life is ended, they receive the reward of eternal life of which the Psalmist sings: They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

But while the faithful weep the world rejoices; for rightly it is only in this present life that the worldlings will have any joy at all, those who place no hope in the joys of another life or who are without hope that they can attain them. This can be understood especially of the persecutors of the Christian faith; for having tormented and slain the martyrs, they rejoiced that they had conquered. But not for long, because while the martyrs were crowned in secret, these others suffered eternal punishment both for their unbelief and for their murders. To these it was said by the mouth of the prophets: Behold my servants shall rejoice, while you shall be confounded. Behold my servants shall praise for joyfulness of heart, and you shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for grief of spirit (Isaias 65. 14).

She remembers no more, he says, the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. As the woman rejoices because a man-child is born into the world, so the Church is filled with exultation at the birth of the Christian peoples into life eternal; because of whose birth she now grieves and is in labour, as a woman who gives birth in this present life. Nor should it seem strange to anyone that he is said to be bom who leaves this present life. For just as he is said to be bom who comes forth from his mother's womb into the light, so also may he truly be said to be born who is delivered of the bonds of the flesh and lifted up to life eternal. For this reason it is the custom of the Church to call those davs on which the death of the martvrs and saints of the Church is commemorated their birth or *Natalitia*.

W hen he says I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice, he meant: I will see you; I will snatch you from the jaws of your enemies; I will crown you as victors; I will prove to you that I was ever with you as you fought, like a witness. For when would he not see his own in the midst of their trials, since he has promised that he will be with them always, even to the end of the world? When the faithful died in the midst of their tortures their adversaries thought that they were without aid, saying; Where is their God. One such as these, surrounded with torments, may well cry out: Behold, O Lord, my afflictions; because the enemy is exalted (Lam. 1. 9), which means to say: Since the enemy who torments me raises his hand against the lowly ones of thine in pride, sustain us by thy help, O Triumphant Creator; prove to us that thou hast seen our struggles when our enemies are driven off and defeated, and that those struggles are pleasing to thee. . . .

If then, brethren, we are afflicted by salutary sufferings ... if with due sorrow we weep for our own sins and for the miseries of our neighbours, the Lord will see us again, that is, he will show himself to us in the future who once deigned to see us and bestow on us the knowledge of his faith. He will see us that he may crown us who once saw us that he might call us. He will see us and our heart will rejoice, and our joy no man shall take from us; for this is the sole reward of those who suffer for God's sake, to rejoice for ever in his sight (PL. 94, Bk. II, *Hom.* 5).

V. ST AUGUSTINE

1. *Living according to man and according to God:*

When, therefore, man lives according to man not according to God, he is a devil. . . . When therefore man lives according to himself he is living a lie, for God is his author and creator, who is certainly not the author and creator of a lie. Alan was made upright

• Cf. *Enarrat, in Ps. IX, The City of God,* 9, and Sermon 254.

that he might live according to him that made him, that he might do God's will, not his own. Not to live as he was made to live is a lie. ... So that to walk according to man and to be carnal are one and the same thing. Now, we have received, not the spirit of this world, but that which is of God; that we might know those things which are freely given us by God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which are taught by man's wisdom, but by that which the Holy Ghost teaches us.

There is no need, therefore, that in our sins and vices we should accuse the nature of our flesh to the injury of its creator, for in its own kind and degree the flesh is good; but to desert the Creator inorder to live according to the created good is not salutary, whether a man choose to live according to the flesh, or according to the soul, or according to the whole human nature which is composed of flesh and soul.... For he who extols the nature of the soul as the chief good and condemns the nature of the flesh as if it were evil is assuredly fleshly, both in his love of the soul and his hatred of the flesh; for these feelings of his arise from human fancy, not from divine truth.

2. *Griefandjoy:*

The citizens of the holy city of God, who live according to God in the pilgrimage of this life, both fear and desire, grieve and rejoice. And because their love is in the right place, these affections of theirs are also right. They fear eternal punishment, they desire eternal life; they grieve because they themselves groan within themselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of their body (Rom. 8. 23); They rejoice in hope, because there shall be brought to pass the saying, death is overcome by the victory. In like manner they fear to sin, they desire to persevere; they grieve in sin, they rejoice in good works. . . . And not only of their own account do they experience these emotions, but also on account of those whose deliverance they desire and whose eternal damnation they fear; whose loss or salvation affects them with grief or with joy.

3. *A right proportion:*

Since we must live a good life in order to attain a blessed life, then it follows that a good life has all these affections rightly ordered, while a bad life has them wrong. But in the blessed life eternal there will be love and joy, not only rightly ordered, but also assured; while fear and grief will not exist. Whence it already appears what manner *of* persons the citizens of the city of God must be in this, their pilgrimage, those who live according to the spirit, not after the flesh. . . . And if there be some of its citizens who seem to restrain and, as it were, temper those passions, they are so elated with ungodly pride that their disease is as much greater as their pain is less. And if some, with a vanity which is monstrous in proportion to its rarity, have become enamoured of themselves because they

can be stimulated and excited by no emotion, moved or bent by no affection, such persons rather lose all humanity than attain true tranquillity. For a thing is not necessarily right because it is inflexible, nor healthy because it is insensible.

SECTION IV. THEOLOGIANS

I. ST THOMAS AQUINAS

(a) Joy an effect of love:

Joy and sorrow proceed from love, but in contrary ways. For joy is caused by love, either through the presence of the thing loved, or because the proper good of the thing loved exists and endures in it; and the latter is the case chiefly in the love of benevolence, whereby a man rejoices in the well-being of his friend, though he be absent. On the other hand, sorrow arises from love, either through the absence of the thing loved, or because the loved object to which we wish well is deprived of its good or afflicted with some evil.

(b) Joy and hope:

There can be spiritual joy about God in two ways. First when we rejoice in the divine goodness considered in itself; secondly when we rejoice in that divine good as participated by us. The former joy is the better and proceeds from charity itself chiefly; while the latter joy proceeds from hope also, whereby we look forward to enjoying the divine good, although this enjoyment itself, whether perfect or imperfect, is obtained according to the measure of one's charity.

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(c) Joy and the presence of God:

So long as we are in the body we are said to be absent from the Lord in comparison with that presence whereby he is present to some by the vision of sight; wherefore the Apostle goes on to say: For we walk by faith and not by sight. Nevertheless, even in this life, he is present to those who love him, by the indwelling of his grace (2-2. q. 28. a. 1).

(d) Joy and sadness:

A two-fold joy in God arises from charity. One, the more excellent, is proper to charity; and with this joy we rejoice in the divine good considered in itself. This joy of charity is incompatible with an admixture of sorrow, even as the good which is its object is incompatible with any admixture of evil. Hence the Apostle says: Rejoice in the Lord always.

The other is the joy of charity whereby we rejoice in the divine good as participated by us. This participation can be hindered by

anything contrary to it, wherefore, in this respect, the joy of charity is compatible with an admixture of sorrow, in so far as a man grieves for that which hinders the participation of the divine good, either in us or in our neighbour, whom we love as ourselves (2-2. q. 28. a. 2. c).

(e) An effect of charity, a fruit rather than a virtue:

Joy is not a virtue distinct from charity, but an act or effect of charity; for which reason it is numbered among the fruits (Gal. 5. 22) (2-2. q. 28. a. 4. c).

2. *Fear of the Lord:*

(a) The two kinds of fear:

Through faith there arises in us an apprehension of certain penal evils, which are inflicted in accordance with the divine judgement. In this way, then, faith is the cause of the fear whereby one dreads to be punished by God; and this is servile fear. It is also the cause of filial fear, whereby one dreads to be separated from God or whereby one shrinks from equalling oneself to him and holds him in reverence, inasmuch as faith makes us appreciate God as an unfathomable and supreme good, separation from which is the greatest evil and to which it is wicked to wish to be equalled. Of the first fear, viz. servule fear, lifeless faith is the cause, while living faith is the cause of the second, viz. filial fear, because it makes man adhere to God and to be subject to him by charity (2. 2. q. 7. a. 1. Cf. 2. 2. q. 19. a. 2. c; a. 6. c).

(b) They differ specifically:

The evil of punishment, from which servile fear springs, differs specifically from the evil of fault, which filial fear shuns . . . Hence it is obvious that servile and filial fear are not the same substantially but differ specifically *(ibid.* in c. a. 5).

Servile fear proceeds from self-love, because it is fear of punishment which is detrimental to one's own good. Hence the fear of punishment is consistent with charity, in the same way that self-love is; because it comes to the same that a man love his own good and that he fear to be deprived of it.

Now, self-love may stand in a threefold relation to charity. In one way it is contrary to charity, when a man places his end in the love of his own good. In another way it is included in charity, when a man loves himself for the sake of God and in God. In a third way it is indeed distinct from charity, but is not contrary thereto, as when a man loves himself from the point of view of his own good, yet not so as to place his end in this, his own good ;... Accordingly, fear of punishment is, in one way, included in charity, because separation from God is a punishment which charity shuns exceedingly; so that this belongs to chaste fear. In another way it is

contrary to charity, when a man shrinks from the punishment that is opposed to his natural good, as being the principal evil in opposition to the good which he loves as an end; and in this way fear of punishment is not consistent with charity. In another way, fear of punishment is indeed substantially distinct from chaste fear, when to wit a man fears a penal evil, not because it separates him from God, but because it is hurtful to his own good, and yet he does not place his end in this good, so that neither does he dread this evil as being the principal evil. Such fear of punishment is consistent with charity, but it is not called sen ile, except when punishment is dreaded as a principal evil. . .. Hence fear considered as servile does not remain with charin', but the substance of servile fear can remain with charity, even as self-love can (2-2. q. 19. a. 6. c).

(c) Fear not always contrary to hope:

Filial fear is not opposed to the virtue of hope; since thereby we fear, not that we may fail in what we hope to attain by God's help, but lest we withdraw ourselves from this help. W herefore filial fear and hope cling together and perfect one another (2-2. q. 19. a. 9 *ad* 1).

(d) Its increase and decrease:

Filial fear must needs increase when charity' increases, even as an effect increases when there is an increase in its cause. For the more one loves a man, the more one fears to offend him and to be separated from him. On the other hand, sen ile fear, as regards its servility·, is entirely cast out when charity' comes, although the fear of punishment remains as to its substance. This fear decreases as charity' increases, chiefly as regards its act, since the more a man loves God, the less he fears punishment; first because he thinks less of his own good, to which punishment is opposed; secondly, because the faster he clings, the more confident he is of the reward, and, consequently, the less fearful of punishment (2-2. q. 19. q. 10. c).

(e) It is a gift of the Holy Ghost:

The fear of God which is numbered among the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost is filial or chaste fear. For it was stated above that the gifts of the Holy Ghost are certain habitual perfections of the soul's powers, whereby these are rendered amenable to the motion of the Holy Ghost, just as, by the moral virtues, the appetitive powers are rendered amenable to the motion of reason. Now, for a thing to be amenable to the motion of a certain mover the first condition required is that it be a non-resistant subject of that mover, because resistance of the movable subject to the mover hinders the movement. This is what filial fear does, since thereby we reverence God and avoid separating ourselves from him. Hence, according to Augustine, filial fear holds the first place, as it were, among the gifts

of the Holy Ghost, in the ascending order, and the last place in the descending order (2-2. q. 19. a. 9. c).

(f) It is the root of humility:

According to Ecclus. 10. 14, the beginning of the pride of man is to fall off from God, that is to refuse submission to God, and this is opposed to filial fear, which reveres God. Thus fear cuts off the source of pride, for which reason it is bestowed as a remedy against pride. Yet it does not follow that it is the same as the virtue of humility, but that it is its origin. For the gifts of the Holy Ghost are the origin of the intellectual and moral virtues, as stated above (I. 2. q. 68. a. 4), while the theological virtues are the origin of the gifts (I. 2. q. 69. a. 4. *ad yini).*

(g) The beginning of wisdom :

A thing may be called the beginning of wisdom in two ways: in one way because it is the beginning of wisdom itself as of its essence; in another way as to its effect. Thus the beginning of an art as to its essence consists in the principles from which that art proceeds, while the beginning of an art as to its effect is that wherefrom it begins to operate: for instance we might say that the beginning of the art of building is the foundation, because that is where the builder begins his work. Now, since wisdom is the knowledge of divine things, as we shall state further on, it is considered by us in one way and in another way by the philosophers. For, seeing that our life is ordained to the enjoyment of God and is directed thereto according to a participation of the divine nature, conferred on us through grace, wisdom, as we look at it, is considered not only as being cognizant of God, as it is with the philosophers, but also as directing human conduct; since this is directed not only by the human law but also by the divine law, as Augustine shows.

Accordingly the beginning of wisdom as to its essence consists in the first principles of wisdom itself, i.e. the articles of faith; and in this sense faith is said to be the beginning of wisdom. But as regards the effect, the beginning of wisdom is the point where wisdom begins to work, and in this way fear is the beginning of wisdom, yet servile fear in one way and filial fear in another. For servile fear is like a principle, disposing man to wisdom from without, in so far as he refrains from sin through fear of punishment, and is thus fashioned for the effect of wisdom, according to Ecclus. 1. 27. The fear of the Lord driveth out sin. On the other hand, chaste or filial fear is the beginning of wisdom as being the first effect of wisdom. For since the regulation of human conduct by the divine law belongs to wisdom, in order to make a beginning, man must first of all fear God and submit himself to him; for the result will be that in all things he will be ruled by God *{ibid,* a 7. c).

II. ST ROBERT BELLARMINE

(A\c shall give a brief summary of this sermon of the saint on the Epistle of this Sunday.)

1. *Argument:*

St Peter teaches us:

(a) that we should abstain from carnal desires;

(b) the reason—because we are pilgrims on this earth and this is not our home;

(c) the effect produced—conversion of the evil-doers and their greater respect for us.

2. *Abstain:*

From carnal desires—not merely sexual, but any desire which is not in accordance with the principles of redemption, such as excessive desire for honours, riches, etc. (cf. Gal. 5. 19). We must not consent to these desires—that is what is meant by abstaining from them. This we must do, not from human respect or fear, but to dry up the fountain of temptation.

3. *The cause:*

Pilgrims do not bother very' much about the land through which they are passing, neither do they purchase stable goods such as houses or lands there, but only enough to support life. They spend as little as possible, they do not desire to be well-know, on the Contran', they try to pass unobsen'ed; they remember and long for their homeland, making their way thither as soon as possible, especially if they know that their time is short and that the way into that country may be closed to them. Thus lived our Lord and the saints, careless of worldly things.

In order to know if we are on the right road as pilgrims we have only to ask ourselves if we are living an honest life, if we are constantly looking towards our fatherland and if we are increasing in the knowledge of God.

Our knowledge of God can increase either extensively, that is by an increase in the things we know about God, or intensively, by an ever deeper penetration into those things we already know. He who has but a confused notion of what is meant by God, the judgement, eternity', etc., needs to perfect himself in the knowledge of these things in order to reach love and fear. Many, even after a long life, have hardly advanced at all in their knowledge of the future life, and we must repeat to them constantly those words: Finish your journey while you still have the light, for fear darkness should overtake you (John 12. 35).

The impediments on the road are carnal desires, which blind the intellect, so that we do not reach the knowledge we should have.

They can change a man into a chained beast who is as blind as was Samson, one who is always going round in circles without reaching anything definite. We must mortify ourselves always—a difficult thing, because we are made up of soul and body.

4. *The fruit:*

Kindness towards sinners—a difficult thing at times. Yet Lot could live respected in Sodom.

The conversion of sinners, who even when they murmur against the good cannot but admire them, and this is often the first preparation to receive the grace of God. How many times did St Paul praise the patience of St Stephen, and St Augustine that of his mother!

The acquisition of true liberty, even though one may be a subject, a slave even. It is the liberty of the sons of God, those who are in a state of grace and so free from sin and capable of earning merits for heaven. Lastly we shall obtain the final and true liberty of the eternal joys of heaven. This is the liberty which comes from the mortification of carnal desires and which purifies our minds to know that truth which alone can make us free (John 8. 32).

SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. ST JOHN OF THE CROSS

1. *Carnal joys:*

If the soul does not quench that joy which may arise within it from the things of sense and direct all its rejoicing towards God, then all the general evils which we have already described as arising from other types of joy may follow; such evils are darkness in the reason, tepidity and spiritual weariness. But to come to particulars, many are the evils, both bodily and sensual, into which the soul may fall through this rejoicing. First of all, from joy in visible things, when the soul does not deny itself in order to attain God, there may come upon it vanity of spirit and distraction of mind, covetousness, immodesty, impurity of thought and also envy of others.

From joy in the sense of hearing useless things there may be distraction of the imagination, gossiping, envy, rash judgements and idle thoughts; while from these arise many other dangerous evils.

From joy in sweet perfumes there come loathing of the poor, which is against the direct teachings of Christ, dislike of serving others, a heart which rebels against lowly things and spiritual insensibility, at least to a degree which is in proportion to this inordinate joy.

From joy in the savour of meats come directly such things as gluttony and drunkeness, wrath, discords and want of charity

towards one's neighbour and the poor, as had the rich man who fared sumptuously even' day with regard to Lazarus. From these arise bodily disorders, infirmities and evil desires, because the incentives to luxury become greater. Directly too there arises spiritual laziness, while the desire for spiritual things is destroyed so that the soul cannot taste any of them, endure them or treat of them. From this joy is bom distraction of the other senses and of the heart, with discontent in many things.

From joy in the touch of soft things may arise many more pernicious evils ... the abominable vice of effeminacy or the incentives thereto. Hence the mind becomes effeminate and timid, while the senses grow soft and predisposed to all kinds of evil. Vain gladness and joy flood the heart; the tongue takes to itself licence, while the eyes roam without restraint; the remaining senses are blunted and deadened, according to the measure of this desire. The judgement is confused, being nourished by spiritual folly and insipidity ; moral cowardice and inconstancy increase, while through the darkness of the heart and weakness of the soul fear is bom where no fear is ... neither do I describe many other evils wrought thus, such as diminution of the spiritual exercises, bodily penances and lukewarmness, together with lack of devotion in the use of the sacraments of penance and the Holy Eucharist.

2. *Advantage of mortification of this carnal joy:*

Marvellous are the benefits the soul derives from self-denial in this rejoicing; some of which are spiritual, some temporal.

The first is that the soul, by restraining its rejoicing in things of sense, is restored from the distraction into which it had fallen through excessive exercise of the senses and is recollected in God. The spirituality' and the virtues that it has acquired are preserved and continually increase.

The second spiritual benefit which comes from self-denial of this kind is very great. We may say with truth that what was once sensual becomes spiritual and that which was bestial becomes rational ; and even that the soul is travelling from a human life to a life which is angelical; that instead of being temporal and human it becomes celestial and divine.. . .

The third benefit is that the pleasures and rejoicings of the will in temporal matters are very greatly increased, for as the Saviour says, they shall receive a hundred-fold in this life. So that if thou deniest thyself one joy the Lord will give thee a hundredfold in this life, both spiritually and temporally. ... For through the eye which is purged from the joys of sight there comes to the soul a spiritual joy, directed to God in all things that are seen, whether divine or human. Through the ear that is purged from the joy of hearing there comes to the soul spiritual joy a hundredfold, directed to God in all

(hat it hears, be it divine or human. Even so is it with the other senses when they are purified....

From what has been said I deduce the following doctrine, namely, that until a man has succeeded in so habituating his senses to the purification of the joys of sense that he is gaining the benefits mentioned of directing all his powers towards God, he must needs deny himself joy and pleasure with respect to these powers, so that he may withdraw his soul from the life of sense. He must fear that, since he is not yet spiritual, he may perchance derive from the practice of these things a pleasure and an energy which is of sense rather than of the spirit. . . .

There is no need to speak of the blessings of glory that, in the life to come, result from the renunciation of these joys. For apart from the fact that the bodily gifts of the life of glory such as agility and clarity, will be much more excellent than in those souls who have not so denied themselves, there will be an increase in the essential glory of the soul corresponding to its love for God, for whose sake it has renounced the things of sense. For every moment of fleeting joy renounced there will be laid up an exceeding weight of glory, as St Paul says *(Ascent of Mt Carmel,* Bk. 3, chaps. 25 and 26).

II. FRAY LUIS OF GRANADA

Fray Luis, in his work *Oration y Meditataciôn,* explains what is meant by true devotion, the causes which impede it, those which help to attain it and the means for defeating the main temptations which come to us in prayer. The following is a summary of his teaching.

True devotion is not a sensible feeling of tenderness, but a prompt will to keep God's commandments and to do all we can to serve him on earth so that we may gain heaven.

The causes which prevent us from being really devout are:

i. Sins, whether mortal or venial.

ii. Excessive remorse of conscience for past sin, which tends to make the soul uneasy and discourage it.

iii. Any bitterness or sadness which is excessive or disordered.

iv. Excessive pre-occupation about material things (he likens these to the mosquitoes of Egypt).

v. Sensible consolation if it is of this world, or excessive desire for spiritual consolations.

vi. Excess in eating and drinking.

vii. Excessive worldly curiosity for news or gossip; for these take up our time and attention, distracting us from spiritual things.

viii. Neglect of acts of piety or spiritual exercises, unless this is prompted by necessity or charity.

The causes which increase devotion are:

i. A firm determination to continue our practice of spiritual exercises, however difficult we may find it. No worth while task is ever without its difficulties.

ii. Keeping the heart and mind from thoughts of vain and worldly things.

iii. A guard over the senses, especially sight, hearing and tongue —the more we give ourselves to these things the less recollected we shall be.

iv. Solitude, which serves to prevent distractions.

v. The reading of spiritual books.

vi. The continual thought of the presence of God and the use of brief prayers called ejaculations. This is one of the greatest helps for those who wish to practice devotion, but who have little time to give themselves to formal prayer.

vii. The continued practice of spiritual exercises at the same time and place every' day—this applies especially to night and morning prayers.

viii. Some bodily mortification in eating, drinking and other things.

ix. Works of mercy and almsdeeds, which give us more confidence when we go to God in time of prayer, because through them we know we are less unworthy; thus we accompany our prayers with good works and our prayer is more likely to be heard, because it comes from a merciful heart.

The chief remedies against the more common temptations which come to us in prayer are:

i. Not to slacken our practice of devotion or spiritual exercises in times of dryness. Consolations can be supplied for by our greater diligence. This is the greatest proof of the true friend of God.

ii. Against thoughts of impurity the remedy is humble prayer and courage. Should they endure a long time then we must convince ourselves that we are gaining more spiritual ground by fighting against them than if we were at peace and joy in the sight of God.

iii. Against temptations which attack our faith the easiest method is to remember that we are children in God's sight and that we have no right to demand reasons from him nor is it necessary for us to enquire as to God's motives. Our reason may be of use in judging earthly things, but it is a very weak instrument when we are dealing with the things of God.

iv. In times of discouragement or lack of confidence in God we must remember that all depends on him and that he is most merciful; while when tempted to presumption we should remember that we are further away from him when we think

ourselves to be nearer to him. We should compare our attitude with that of the saints and remember our weakness.

III: DOM COLUMBA MARMION

i. **Joy** ^*ie mysteries °f Christ:*

These souls that have not understood the mystery of Christ lose themselves in a joyless labour. Why is this? Because all that our human ingenuity is able to create for our inner life serves for nothing if we do not base our edifice on Christ: *Fundamentum aliud nemo potest ponere praeter id quod positum est, quod est Christus Jesus.*

This explains the change that sometimes takes place in certain souls. For years their lives have been as it were cramped, they have been often depressed, hardly ever contented, for ever finding new difficulties in the spiritual life. Then one day God gives them the grace of understanding that Christ is our all, that he is the alpha and omega, that out of him we have nothing, that in him we have everything, for everything is summed up in him. From that moment all is, as it were, changed for those souls; their difficulties vanish like the shades of night before the rising sun.

2. *Joy in the grace of baptism:*

Gratitude is the first sentiment baptismal grace should cause to rise within us. Joy is the second. We ought never to think of our baptism without a deep sense of inward gladness. On the day of our baptism we are bom, in principle, to everlasting beatitude. We hold the very pledge of it in this sanctifying grace then given to us; having entered into the family of God, we have a right to share in the heritage of the only Son. What greater motive of joy could there be for a soul here below than to think that, on this day of its baptism, the Eternal Father looked upon it with love and, naming it his child, called it to share in the blessings that overflow from Christ.

y Joy in the faith:

This faith which is crowned and manifested by love, is lastly a well-spring of joy for us. Our Lord said, *Beati qui non viderunt et crediderunt:* Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed. He said this, not for his disciples, but for us. And why then does our Lord declare blessed those who believe in him? Faith is a source of joy because it makes us share in the knowledge of Christ. He is the eternal Word and has taught us divine secrets.... In believing what he tells us we have the same knowledge as he; faith is a source of joy because it is the source of light.

It is a source of joy too because it places us in radical possession of future bliss, it is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not. Jesus says himself: He that

believeth in the Son hath life everlasting. Note the present tense—he hath—Christ does not speak in the future tense—he will have—but he speaks of an already assured possession.... Provided that we put away from faith all that can diminish and tarnish it; that we develop it by prayer and practice, that we constantly give it the occasion of manifesting itself in love, faith places in our hands the substance of the joys to come and gives birth to unshaken confidence.

Qui credit in eiim non confundetur (Christ, Life of the Soul).

SECTION VI. PAPAL TEXTS

I. *The Church suffers in order to bring a new order into the world:*

(a) She is not a child of this world, but she lives in it:

She is not a child of this world, yet the Church is in the world, she lives in it and from it she takes her sons, sharers always in the joys and sorrows of the world; in which she suffers, fights and prays, as she prayed from early times, together with the Apostle Paul, who made supplications, prayers, petitions and thanks for all men. . . . And what is this but a prayer for peace among nations which the Church at all times has sent forth to God, that God who desires that all men should be saved and should reach a knowledge of the truth (Pius XII to the College of Cardinals, 2 June 1939).

(b) To bring this task to a completion is the work of the Church:

A renewal of men's minds proportioned to the changed circumstances and needs of our time is the task of the Catholic Church, which has the duty of a mother to us all. She must preach the Gospel entrusted to her by her divine founder with all its lessons of truth, justice and love. She must make it her business to ensure that these lessons strike deep and abiding root in men's hearts. This is a really noble and fruitful work, calculated to secure the interests of peace; nothing could be more productive, nothing better suited to her high mission. It is a work whose urgency and vast extent threatens to break the spirit of all ranks in the Church militant. But the duty of promoting, to the best of our power, the coming of God's kingdom is one binding upon all who have been called into that kingdom, and out of Satan's power by their regeneration at the font; it is a duty which has been fulfilled in a hundred different ways through the long course of the centuries, at the cost of immense labours and hardships. To be a partaker of that kingdom means not only conforming our lives to its precepts, but making efforts to secure that its frontiers shall be daily enlarged, that new citizens may avail themselves of the spiritual privileges it offers (Pius XII, *Summi Pontificatus,* 1939).

(c) **In this she docs not seek to usurp the rights of rulers:**

We declare in all apostolic sincerity that the Church is as far removed as possible from any intention of that kind; that she stretches out her motherly arms to men, not asking to have dominion over them, but in every possible way to be their servant. She does not seek to intrude herself into the position occupied, in a special and perfectly legitimate way, by secular authorities. Rather she aids them in their mission, filled with the spirit and following in the steps of him who went about doing good. The Church enjoins and preaches that obedience and respect should be paid to earthly powers, which derive from God their high mission; she is faithful to the command of Christ, our Lord, when he said: Give Caesar what is Caesar's, and God what is God's *(ibid.')*.

2. *The five basic points for the establishment of this new order:*

(a) **Victory over hatred** :

Victory over the hatred which today divides nations and a renunciation of systems and practices which foment it. There exists in some countries at present an uncurbed propaganda, which does not flee from distortion of the truth, but which day by day and almost hour by hour, paints other nations in a false and insulting light. Anyone who truly longs for the well-being of the people, who desires to preserve from incalculable harm the spiritual and moral bases for future collaboration among nations, must consider it a duty and a high mission to see to it that the natural ideals of truth, justice, courtesy and co-operation are not lost to the minds and the sentiments of mankind, above all the sublime ideal of fraternal charity brought by Christ into the world (Pius XII to the College of Cardinals, Christmas 1940).

(b) **Victory over the lack of confidence in international law:**

There must be victory over the lack of confidence which weighs so heavily on international law, thus rendering impossible any true understanding. There must be a return to the principle: *Justitiae soror incorrupta fides,* to that fidelity in the observance of agreements without which there can be no peaceful co-existence between peoples, above all when it is a question of weaker and stronger nations.

(c) **Victory over the principle of force and utility:**

There must be victory over the principle that utility is the basis and rule of law, and that force creates a right. . . . There must be a return to a serious and deep morality in the rules which govern the relations between nations—a thing which obviously does not exclude looking for what is honestly useful or the opportune and legitimate use of force to guard those rights which are attacked violently or to repair any breach *of* them *(ibid.)*.

(d) Victory over the origins of such conflicts in world economics:

'I here must be victory over the germs of such conflicts consisting in the great differences which exist in the field of world economics. There must be a progressive action, guaranteed by treaty, to arrive at an organization which will give to all States the means necessary to assure a reasonable state of life for their subjects, no matter what their social status.

(e) Victory over cold egoism:

There must be victory over that spirit of cold egoism which, proud of its strength, easily ends by violating not merely the honour and sovereignty of States, but also the just, healthy and disciplined liberty' of its subjects. In its place must be introduced a sincere juridical and economic solidarity, a fraternal collaboration according to the precepts of the divine law which should be established among nations once their autonomy and independence have been assured *(ibid.)*.

SECTION VII. SERMON SCHEMES

I. LITURGICAL

A: Living for God

This earth—a vale of tears

1. If we tty' to penetrate into the central theme of this Sunday we see that it is: the Christian should not live for the world, but for God. Therefore the Gospel warns us that we shall lament and weep —that this earth is a vale of tears.

2. In other places in the sermon of Christ at the Last Supper we find the same idea:

(a) It is because you do not belong to the world, because I have singled you out from the midst of the world, that the world hates you.

(b) They will persecute you just as they have persecuted me (John 15.19-20).

The Christian—his true greatness

i. In order that the Christian may more easily· separate himself from the world the Church makes him see the greatness of the name he bears and its significance. It might be said that she repeats to him in other words the warnings of St Paul:

(a) Consider, brethren, the circumstances of your own calling (1 Cor. i. 26).

(b) It is from him that you take your origin, through Christ Jesus, whom God gave to us to be our wisdom, our justification, our sanctification, and our atonement (v. 30).

2. There is an allusion to this vocation and its greatness in the Collect and the Alleluia vcrsiclc:

(a) As Christians we have professed Christ and have received the redemption which God sent to his people;

(b) therefore we do not now belong to ourselves, but to God; we do not belong to this world but our part is in those things which are above: Risen, then, with Christ, you must lift your thoughts above, where Christ now sits at the right hand of God. You must be heavenly-minded, not earthly-minded; you have undergone death, and your life is hidden away now with Christ in God (Col. 3. 1-3).

The Christian's programme of life

How is the Christian to live for God and seek those things which are above? The Epistle gives us the answer in part of one of the letters of St Peter:

(a) During the reign of Nero, the arms used by those who persecuted the Christians were calumny, violence and hatred.

i. These cannot be used by the Christian; they are of the earth, and the children of God must be ruled by the Spirit (Rom. 8).

ii. To hatred and calumny we must oppose patience, love and truth.

(b) The Christian cannot compromise with the customs and ways of the world:

i. Beloved, I call upon you to be like strangers and exiles, to resist those natural appetites which besiege the soul . . . (1 Pet. 2. 11).

ii. The Christian also has to keep a number of positive precepts, which St Peter outlines: Give all men their due, to the brethren your love; to God your reverence, to the king, due honour (v. 17).

(c) It is difficult even for the Christians of our own day to comprehend these words, because they too are suffering from persecution of all kinds. However, St Peter's ideas are for all time. Even though it be another Nero who represents the supreme authority we must still obey and bow down before that authority, however unworthy its methods. The Christian should have only one main thought—provided this authority is legitimate in its institution, then it comes from God and we honour him in obeying it.

Glorify God

In the Introit all those who dwell on this earth are invited to give God glory and praise. This praise must not rest on mere words; it must "pass into good works. The finest way to glorify God in our lives is to live them as perfect Christians.

His help

This is no easy task; but it becomes easier with God's help. We seek that help in the three prayers of the Mass of today, all of which have the same object, that the Christian shall not live for the world, but for God.

(a) In the collect we ask that he may give us the grace to avoid all that is opposed to the Christian ideal and grant us to act in accordance with his teaching.

(b) In the Secret attention is drawn to one of the effects of Holy Communion, viz. that of making us desire heavenly things and shun those of this earth.

(c) The Postcommunion asks that the Holy Eucharist, whilst filling us with a desire for heavenly things, especially eternal life, may also give us the strength to attain that life.

B: The Lord is my shepherd (Ps. 22)

1. *God is my shepherd...*

(a) Every Thursday in the divine office the Church makes use of Psalm 22, which begins: The Lord is my shepherd, How can I lack anything? It is the psalmist's song of praise for the loving generosity of God.

(b) The liturgy of the Breviary thus carries on throughout the year the idea of the Good Shepherd which was proposed to us last Sunday.

(c) If the book of psalms should be the book of Christian prayer, then we can also say that this psalm sums up perfectly the fundamental attitude of the Christian towards God—one of confidence and abandonment.

2. *How can I lack anything? . . .*

(a) All is contained in this verse—the rest of the psalm is only a development of this theme. It is a hymn of confidence and abandonment to divine providence, to the hands of that Shepherd who will pasture his sheep, guide them and free them from all evil.

(b) If Christ, who died for me, who did everything he could for me, is my shepherd, then nothing will be lacking to me. I need not worry about anything, long for anything (Matt. 6. 25).

3. *He gives me a resting place where there is pasture and leads me out by cool waters . . .*

(a) Just as the shepherd looks for green pasture of tender grass for the sheep, so Christ feeds me with his doctrine, his truth and his life.

(b) He leads his sheep to the cool waters of his grace; that grace by which we learn his words and teachings and put them into practice. This grace makes good soil out of our hard hearts.

4. *By sure paths he leads me . . .*

(a) Thc Good Shepherd is not ignorant of the paths; he knows the best and the shortest way; he knows the tortuous paths and those that are dangerous; he leads the sheep by those that are easiest and free from danger.

(b) Thus the Lord, through his gentle commands, diminishes the force of the Tempter while he increases that of our charity, freeing us from thc occasions of sin. All this he does out of honour pledged (v· 3):

i. through his goodness and mercy towards us;

ii. the soul need fear nothing. His ways may seem dangerous, hard and stony to us—but they will always lead to heaven.

5. *What though I walk with the shadow of death all around me?...*

(a) Christ is our shepherd even when he hides himself from us; in consolations and in periods of dryness he is there just the same.

(b) No matter what external trials may come upon us, no matter how frequent our tears and the wounds in our heart, he remains our shepherd and his rod and crook are our comfort (v. 4). At times he chastises, and at times he caresses, but he always seeks our good.

(c) The enemy may surround us as a roaring lion to devour us, but the soul will always journey on in peace if it allows itself to be guided by the crook and rod of the Good Shepherd.

6. *Thou dost spread a banquet before me . . .*

Some think that a new image begins here, that of the kind host. However we shall continue to follow up that of the Good Shepherd, as did St Robert Bellarmine and others:

(a) The Good Shepherd spreads the banquet of the Eucharist before me, that banquet in which his flesh is meat and his blood drink.

(b) He also gives me the banquet of his interior consolations and inspirations.

7. *All my life thy goodness pursues me . . .*

This is the perfect image of what Christ means to me; even though I may wander like a sheep which has gone astray, still Christ will be all goodness and benevolence towards me. For this reason nothing can ever be lacking to me if I remain close to him.

II. THE EPISTLE

The Christian in the world

Pilgrims in this world

We live in the world, but we do not wish to belong to it. St Peter shows us how this can be brought about. He establishes the principle: I call upon you to be like strangers and exiles:

(a) The pilgrim lives oft the country in which he travels; he cannot isolate himself from it altogether.

(b) However, he does think of it as a strange land and does not allow himself to be too much influenced by it, since he will one day have to live according to the customs of his own land.

(c) The rule then can be divided into two general principles:

i. not to live a worldly life;

ii. but to live in an educated and civilized manner in the world.

The contamination of the world

1. There is much evil in die world and we might say that most of it turns on concupiscence.

2. Hence the first norm of St Peter; resist those natural appetites which besiege the soul:

(a) The principle is absolute and universal:

and in this matter we must not allow ourselves to be influenced by the world's standards, but by those of true Christian morality.

(b) It contains a positive element:

that of allowing others to see, by our behaviour, what we are, so that they, in their turn, may learn to praise God and receive his graces.

A Christian life in the world

1. Christianity is a way of life in the world, which it attempts to guide and sanctify. St Peter does not try to destroy social life, he wants to sanctify it:

(a) he wants rulers to continue to rule;

(b) slaves to see the dignity of their person and office;

(c) married people to live according to the true sanctity of their state;

(d) this is what we mean by living an educated and social life in the world.

2. We shall limit our comments to the verses proposed in today's epistle:

(a) Rulers and subjects . . .

i. If a ruler has to be obeyed in the name of the Lord, then he must also govern in the Lord's name.

ii. In a word, the ruler must praise and help the good and chastise the evil.

iii. Christians as subjects find their norm in these words of St Peter: Give all men their due; to the brethren your love; to God your reverence; to the king, due honour (v. 17). Not senile honour and obedience nor much less rebellion. Sanctified obedience: sanctified, because it is given to God through the ruler.

(b) Servants and master:

i. St Peter addresses the former only in this letter. There is also a Christian way of serving—submission out of respect for God's law.

ii. St Peter does not demand unconditional acceptance of an unjust situation; he accepts it for the time being as a necessary evil and points out how it can be sanctified, by supporting it for Christ and to become like Christ.

Examples to the world

1. *Our personal sanctity:*

(a) will quieten calumnies:

To silence by honest living the ignorant chatter of fools (vv. 15-16);

(b) will open the eyes of the others:

They will praise God for you, when his time comes to have mercy on them (v. 12).

(c) will convert many (cf. 1 Peter. 3. 1).

2. By living holy lives in the world we shall sanctify the world.

m. THE GOSPEL

A: The general themes of the Last Supper Discourse

Its richness in doctrine

1. It is a long and most beautiful leave-taking, threaded with sadness, and an occasional melancholy. It is a sea of ideas and sentiments.

2. It should form the basis for many sermons on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, because many of the sentiments expressed are so very human, even though they are full of consolation and the solutions to difficulties are divine.

Even the saints said farewell to those they loved with sadness—the example which comes to mind at once is that of St Paul (Acts 20. 36 ff.).

Three principal key themes

1. *Separation:*

The last lessons of the Master, the new love and mutual charity even to the shedding of blood, the secure promise that what we ask in his name shall be given to us.

2. *The world:*

The principal enemy of the apostles.

3. *The consolation:*

Two fold.

(a) The presence of Christ in the soul and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

(b) The Christian religion, because it is the true religion and the only one, considers tears as part of the human inheritance—it takes life as it reallv is.

i. The followers of Christ will know their bitter moments in contrast to the false and present joy of the world.

ii. Behind this apparent joy there is a boredom, anxiety and at times open despair.

iii. Christ offers to his disciples a peace and joy which is unknown to the world.

4. *The desolation of soul of the modern world:*

(a) The lack of peace has never been greater or more felt than in our time.

(b) The very literature of the time shows it clearly—it is frustrated, distorted and lacking in real meaning.

The philosophy of consolation

i. Men cannot live without some consolation, says St Thomas.

2. There is a philosophy and a theology of consolation:

(a) Christ's discourse offers us a theology of consolation.

(b) The philosophy of consolation tells us that a man rests and rejoices in the full realization of his powers and faculties.

(c) Truth, beauty' and love are the sources of consolation which are highest and most pure in the natural order.

(d) It would be inhuman to dry up these sources, what Christian morality tries to do is to put them in their rightful place and direct them,

(e) but religion attempts to urge man to seek even higher sources of consolation than these purely human ones.

The theology of consolation

1. Christ, in this discourse, offers to his disciples a true and eternal consolation which no one can take from them.

2. *There are two motives for this consolation:*

(a) the presence of Christ in the soul;

(b) the hope of the life to come.

3. *The presence of Jesus:*

(a) The last verses of today's Gospel tell us: So it is with you; you are distressed now; but one day I will see you again, and then your hearts will be glad; and your gladness will be one which nobody can take from you (John 16. 22).

(b) Jesus becomes present in the soul through the influence of the Holy Spirit, which he and the Father send. This is the main theme of the discourse.

(c) It is the true consolation of the saints, who pass through the dark night of the soul in order to renounce human or natural consolations in favour of those which arc spiritual and divine.

4. *Future glory:*

The other theme of consolation in this discourse.

(a) Chapter 14 of St John begins: Do not let your hearts be distressed. I am going away to prepare a home for you.

(b) In chapter 17 he says: This, Father, is my desire, that all those whom thou hast entrusted to me may be with me where I am, so as to see my glory, thy gift made to me, in that love which thou didst bestow upon me before the foundation of the world (v. 24).

B: I go to the Father (John 16. 17)

1. *The end of his redemptive work on earth:*

Before his birth it was said of him that he would come to do the will of the Father; and all his life Christ lived with his eyes on his Father.

2. The sacerdotal prayer of Christ: I have exalted thy glory on earth… (John 17. 4) indicates clearly that the sole reason motivating the life of Christ was the glory of the Father:

(a) the redemption has no object if we prescind from this idea;

(b) Christ was made flesh and died to consecrate the world to the Father.

The Christian's life is a journey towards God the Father

1. It begins in baptism, by which we are made sons of God and receive the adoption of sons by which we cry Abba, Father (Rom. 8-15).

2. The whole of the Christian's life must be a steady progress towards the Father under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Those who follow the leadings of God's spirit are all God's sons (Rom. 8. 14).

(a) Sinners:

Moved by his actual graces they feel at times the impulse to go to the Father like the prodigal son or Mary of Magdala. They seek his merciful and loving arms, which are stretched out to embrace them.

(b) Once reconciled to the Father:

They must seek him further through the rough road of humiliations, poverty, suffering, etc.

(c) They must aspire to an ever increasing perfection in the spiritual life, which is a continuous progress. The end is heaven, and until we reach it there can be no letting up in our efforts. In

heaven there can be no increase in our love; on earth it can always increase, no matter how perfect it may be.

(d) The moment of our greatest love must be that of our death; the most intense act of it that of our last breath.

(e) The words: Into thy hands I commend my spirit, put on the lips of a Christian, must have the same significance that they had for Christ on the cross; the culmination in the hands of the Father of a life which was always directed towards him.

The universal vocation

1. The constant advance towards perfection is, without doubt, a universal vocation, it applies to all.

2. But all do not attain it. To make it possible we must examine two terms, world and God; if we draw nearer to God then we must draw further away from the world; this is a pre-requisite which is necessary if we are to perceive the tender and gentle motions of the Spirit.

Apart from the world

1. It would not be reasonable, granting the temporary nature of the world, to bend all our efforts towards it and give our heart to it when we are capable of infinity.

St Paul urges us to relinquish the world in these terms: The time is drawing to an end ... the fashion of this world is soon to pass away (i Cor. 7. 29-31).

This departure from the world need not necessarily be a physical one; it implies a life during which we do not become inordinately attached to the world or allow our minds to be unduly influenced by the world's opinions.

2. Without this condition it is impossible to perceive the motions of the Holy Spirit yet we should be able to understand that spiritual progress and a worldly life are incompatible. Nevertheless many Christians try to make them compatible.

3. Those who form part of the Christian Apostolate, priests and religious especially, have to be apart from the world, because the efficacy of their apostolate depends on it. They must be intimately united with the Father.

Christ, our model

1. The Christian life is nothing more or less than a reproduction of that of Christ in us. And in the intimate life of Christ there is only one aim—the Father and his glory.

2. The daily life of the Christian, in spite of his work, studies, etc., must all be directed towards the greater glory of God:

(a) This journey towards God might well begin with daily mass, the greatest homage to the Father we can pay.

(b) During the day we should try to avoid ambitious seeking after the things of the world, also attachment to creatures which is inordinate.

(c) In the trials and tribulations which come our way we should try to direct them all to God's honour and glory.

(d) This is true even of our faults:

i. we are well assured that everything helps to secure the good of those who love God (Rom. 8. 28); St Thomas adds—even sin;

ii. these faults should not disquiet us or disturb our peace;

iii. they should rather serve to humiliate us and make us more submissive to God in the future—they serve as a warning that we are not yet detached from the world as we should be.

C: A little while

i. Our Lord said: After a little while you will see me no longer; and again after a little while you will have sight of me (John 16. 16). The actual interpretation of the meaning of this text is doubtful; the Greeks Fathers incline to the literal opinion, i.e. that the coming here referred to is that of the resurrection and Pentecost; while the Latin Fathers include in the period between the Last Supper and the coming of Christ the whole history of humanity until the last day.

2. Here we shall dwell on the first interpretation, especially as it refers to the life of Christ in the soul.

The interior visitation of Christ

i. This is the presence of Christ in the soul.

(a) Thus Christ says:

It is only a little while now, before the world is to see me no more; but you can see me, because I live on, and you too will have life *(ibid.* 14. 19).

(b) He continues:

He who loves me will win my Father's love, and I too will love him, and will reveal myself to him ... if a man has any love for me, he will be true to my word; and then he will win my Father's love, and we will both come to him, and make our continual abode with him (v. 23).

2. Jesus is talking about the interior vision *of the* soul in a state of grace:

(a) through the life of grace Jesus becomes the soul of the soul, as the mystics put it;

(b) this can also be applied to grace itself.

Joy as the eflect of this presence

i. Throughout the sermon he opposes the true joy in him to the false joy of the world :

(a) You will weep and lament, while the world rejoices; you will be distressed, but your distress shall be turned into joy (John 16.20).

(b) One day I will see you again, and then your hearts will be glad; and your gladness will be one which nobody can take from you (John 16.22).

(a) comes from the presence of the Paraclete in the soul. I will ask the Father and he will give you another to befriend you, one who is to dwell continually with you for ever (John 14. 16);

(b) he will remain with them for ever: he will be continually at your side, nay, he will be in you *(ibid.* 17);

(c) and as a consequence *of* this the disciples will know: that you are in me and I in you *(ibid. 20).*

The absence of Christ is necessary

1. In order that the Holy Spirit may come upon them to console them,

(a) he disappears from the eyes of their bodies so that they may learn to see him spiritually and rejoice in him with the eyes of the spirit;

(b) And yet I can say truly that it is better for you I should go away; he who is to befriend you will not come to you unless I do go, but if only I make my way there I will send him to you (John 16.7).

2. Sr *Thomas's commentary:*

(a) The name Paraclete in Greek means consoler and refers to the Holy Spirit who is the consoler because he is the spirit of love, and love is the source of consolation and of spiritual joy.

(b) Some modern commentators take the word Paraclete in the sense of advocate, and it can be translated in both ways. St Thomas accepts both and gives their meaning.

(c) The joy which comes from this presence is given even in this life:

i. this doctrine is stressed continually by St Paul (cf. Phil. 4. 4),

ii. and in St John we read : Until now you have not been making any requests in my name; make them, and they will be granted, to bring you gladness in full measure (John 16. 24).

..5'

The joy is permanent

It is often objected that such joy does not last in this life; but this is not true once we reach the heights of the spiritual life (such as the state of mystical marriage, for example).

D: Blessed are those who mourn (Matt. 5. 5)

Mourning, the inheritance of the Christian

1. After original sin we can observe a dualism in man; at one and the same time we suffer the consequences of that sin and we are also redeemed by Christ:

(a) Through grace we live in communication with God, yet at the same time we walk through a very real valley of tears.

(b) We suffer, we weep, but we also know that: I do not count these present sufferings as the measure of that glory which is to be revealed in us (Rom. 8. 18).

2. Thus there is a double aspect in our lives, one of suffering and one of hope: this is clearly set forth in today's Gospel (John 16. 20) and also in the beatitude we have quoted (Matt. 5. 5).

Those who weep and those who laugh

1. Comparison between the judgement of the world and those of the Gospel.

2. *The world's idea is:*

(a) those are happy who are having a good time. The important thing is to amuse oneself. We must use this life to enjoy ourselves;

(b) it calls those who suffer unfortunate or unhappy.

3. *The Gospel verdict:*

(a) blessed are those who mourn . . .

(b) to those who spend all the time and efforts in seeking their own pleasure the Lord says: Woe upon you who laugh now; you shall mourn and weep (Luke 6. 25).

Pessimists cannot understand this beatitude

(a) They admit the existence of spiritual values, together with the supernatural destiny of man; but their faith is weak, almost dead.

(b) They do not know how to throw the light of faith on events which bring sadness or on suffering.

(c) This very pessimism leads them to think in a material way.

Those who weep shall be comforted

i. An astonishing statement at the best of times. To understand it we must remember that:

(a) Jesus suffered and carried the cross on his shoulders;

(b) Mary and the Apostles also suffered, but they found their consolation at Pentecost;

(c) Peter wept for his denials, and encountered the gentle look of our Lord;

(d) Paul wept, but affirmed: I cannot contain myself for happiness, in the midst of all these trials of mine (2 Cor. 7. 4);

(e) the martyrs wept, but their souls were filled with joy.

2. Blessed are those who mourn:

In all the beatitudes, according to St Thomas, there is defined an action and its reward; the latter corresponding to the former.

(a) In the third beatitude, apart from friendship, there is a promise of consolation for all those who suffer.

(b) We might say that it is an outpouring of divine mercy on human misery:

i. the poor, the miserable, the sick;

ii. those who are in prison, who are sad, lonely, not understood by men;

iii. the persecuted, the tormented, those who are punished or tried by misfortunes;

iv. those are the ones who can truly be said to weep.

(c) For those this beatitude is good news indeed,

i. telling them that God is waiting to wipe all tears from their eyes (Apoc. 21. 4);

ii. that *this valley of tears is not their* permanent dwelling place, rather it is a night spent in a bad inn.

Different *kinds of weeping*

I. This beatitude, like all *the rest, determines 2. particular attitude of our will face to face with the prize which is promised.*

2. Even in *this life* we receive the consolation in relation to the particular type of mourning and derived from it.

3. There are several types of this mourning:

(a) They mourn who realize their condition as pilgrims in this life:

i. They mourn because they only see God darkly and as it were in a glass, while they desire to see him face to face.

ii. This life is like an exile; it is a torment of love which has not yet attained full union with the beloved. This mourning is pleasing to God because it is the fruit of faith and intense love.

(b) They mourn who live stripped of creature comforts:

i. They know that such things are vain and passing; that they are but instruments to lead us to God.

ii. They refuse to allow themselves to become unduly attached to creatures, using them only as God meant them to be used.

iii. They suppress the life of the senses in order to live by faith.

iv. They weep because this is a painful process, owing to the attraction of the things of sense.

(c) **Those mourn who weep for their sins, being made sad unto penance:**

i. We should all mourn for the sins of the world as well as for our own, and make reparation for them.

ii. We weep because Christ has been crucified and is often crucified again, for the sins of men. In this sense we weep because Christ's teaching is not heeded in the world and by so many for whom he died. This mourning should be the common lot of all Christians.

(d) Those who have real compassion for others weep at the trials of those who go through life with a heavy cross of suffering:

i. This is the special mission of the priest and apostle, who should say with St Paul: Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is scandalized and I am not on fire? (2 Cor. 11. 29).

ii. Those who give themselves up to a worldly life without thought about the unhappiness of others are without heart and faith.

iii. Anyone who really understands the doctrine of the Mystical Body must weep for the sufferings of the other members.

(e) **They weep who voluntarily embrace the cross:**

i. in order to follow Christ more closely: If any man has a mind to come my way, let him renounce self, and take up his cross, and follow me (Matt. 16. 24);

ii. to complete the work of redemption (Col. 1. 24);

iii. to expiate for his own sins and those of others.

4. *Nature resists the cross:*

For this reason those who take it up in any shape or form may be truly said to weep and mourn.

(a) It is accepted when we accept those trials which providence sends us;

(b) we seek it in voluntary penance;

(c) when we subject our wills to the law of God and mortify the senses.

The consolation

All those who weep shall be comforted. The word of the Lord does not lie to us. Those who share Christ's sufferings will also share his glory: Only we must share his sufferings, if we are to share his glory (Rom. 8. 17).

(a) The final and definitive consolation will be the sight of God for eternity.

(b) We share in it in this life in so far as we already possess that final glory through our hope:

i Hope is the best consolation in this life, because through it we are already joined to God as to our final end.

ii. This consolation will not pass away as do those of the world.

iii. We are certain that, provided we persevere until the end, our sorrow will pass and our consolation be assured. It is an obscure consolation now, but at the same time full of light, through these words of Christ, Blessed are they who mourn.

(c) Therefore joy must win the victory over suffering every time, since all suffering will be turned into joy. The motives for joy are more solid than those for suffering.

E: Sadness turned into Joy

Our inheritance

1. Jesus made his most wonderful promises in the Upper Room:

(a) Together with the promise of the Comforter he tells his disciples that sadness will be, for them, his precious gift: You will be distressed.

(b) Then he goes on to let them see what kind of sadness he is talking about: But your distress shall be turned into joy.

(c) He left to them the most fertile seed of glory, i.e. sanctifying grace which is clothed in sorrow and distress as a protective garment.

2. Let us join these two terms, sadness and joy, because they go hand in hand in the doctrine and life of Jesus.

Sorrow and joy must go hand and hand

1. The life of Christ is the perfect example of what his doctrine would be on this point:

(a) the very fact of the Incarnation;

(b) the tears in Bethlehem while the angels announced joy to the shepherds;

(c) the hidden life teaches us that joy which can only be found in work well done;

(d) his apostolic labours which left him tired yet happy because he had won souls to his cause (e.g. the woman at the well. John 4. 6);

(e) above all, his sorrowful passion and death, which were the open road to our salvation and his glory.

2. *The doctrine of Christ:*

(a) It is enough to go through the beatitudes as Christ announced them to an astonished audience, who were startled at the very idea.

(b) He speaks of the poor in spirit, the meek, those who mourn, those who hunger and thirst after justice, the merciful, the pure of heart, those who love peace and those who suffer persecution for justice sake.

(c) These form a whole army of souls who suffer interiorly or exteriorly, in renunciation of body, heart and mind. Those who suffer calumny and other injustices which hurt badly.

(d) Yet all these are called Blessed by Christ.

(c) It is the doctrine he taught later in the Cenacle—that of sorrow turned into joy; it is the same as that taught after his resurrection on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24. 26) and in the Cenacle (Luke 24. 52); the need for Christian suffering as the only way into the kingdom.

The reason for this doctrine

1. The mind alone will not be able to find sufficient reason for suffering as a means to joy. Sometimes, in the purely human order, it will find a reason, since the very natural law itself imposes limits which bring pain.

2. Faith, however, can unravel all the threads which join sadness and joy in the thought of Jesus.

(a) The fundamental reason is that true joy can only be joined to what is good—and the good is found very often in sacrifice.

(b) At times, too, sacrifice, even if it could be avoided without sin, is converted into our finest and most excellent good because of the value it has:

i. Because the destruction of sin is a good which demands from us the sacrifice of repentance and a sincere penance.

ii. The very virtues which have to be rooted in the soul so that it may attain the glory and joy of heaven demand sacrifice and continued effort and these can be painful to fallen human nature.

iii. The greatest sign of love is to give one's life for one's friend (John 15. 13) as Christ did for us. Now it is not a question of expiation for our own sins, but of attaining the supreme joy of being a co-redeemer with Christ on the cross of suffering.

(c) Lastly, there are times when the suffering which brings such joy is inflicted unjustly by other agents outside ourselves. Persecutors torment the Church, and in order to defend the faith it is necessary at times to give one's life, because the life of the spirit is worth more than that of the body; then the greater suffering brings with it greater joy.

The example of the saints

1. *The apostles:*

(a) They were dismayed at first when they heard our Lord's words; after his death they shut themselves up in the Cenacle.

(b) Yet they are the first to give us a guarantee that his words are true; because they came out from the council glorying in the fact that they were found worthy to suffer something for the name of Jesus (Acts 5. 41).

2. And after them all the saints; this idea put into the mouth of St Teresa the phrase, either to suffer or to die; and inspired that other saying of St Mary Magdalen dei Pazzi, always to suffer and never to die.

F: The roots and remedies for sadness

The roots of sadness

There are many causes of sadness; we may note just a few:

(a) Sickness:
This brings a natural sadness.

(b) Lack of mortification of the passions:
This makes many souls impatient, incapable of putting up with any inconvenience, especially from their neighbour. They become unsociable and if they do meet with others they are brusque and domineering. There is no peace within their hearts and they lack peace of mind and tranquillity. There is no true joy in the man who allows his passions free play.

(c) Attachment to material things:
This, according to St Augustine, is one of the most frequent causes of sadness. The man who lives for God alone will find himself at peace and with a great joy because he is free from this type of sadness.

(d) Pride:
While pride reigns in your hearts, says Rodriguez, you can be sure that you will never be without sadness and melancholy, because there will be so many occasions which will cause them; thus you will live in constant torment. Many times it is not the work or the difficulty' of our state which impedes us, because there are many more difficulties than we have ever dreamed of in some of those offices which we desire and crave. No, it is that pride which makes us desire honours.

(e) Not doing the will of God:
This is one of the most frequent causes of sadness—not to do that which each one should according to his state or profession:

i. *everyday experience teaches this:* the exact fulfilment of our daily duties brings with it a great and a lasting peace, while the contrary makes us feel sad and disappointed;

ii. *God himself has told us that sin is a cause of sadness:* in the case of Cain the sin was clear from his very look (Gen. 4. 6);

iii. *it is a natural law:* there is no pain so great as that of a guilty conscience. Even though there may be no witnesses, that conscience will always accuse us and we shall have no real happiness until we give up the sin which has caused it.

Remedies against sadness

1. *The practice of virtue:*

(a) He who always does the will of God has within him the cure for sadness.

(b) St Bernard says:

Do you wish to avoid sadness? Then live well; for he who lives a good life is always happy.

(c) St Ambrose says:

He who practises virtue is always tranquil, content and stable. God reserves for him the precious gift of peace and joy. Virtuous hearts are not moved by the things of this earth, they are not troubled by fear, worn out by sadness or tormented by pain.

2. *Confidence in God:*

God knows the evil which afflicts us and he is all-powerful to help us. His mercy is always ready and willing to succour us (Ps. 41. 6-7).

3. *Prayer:*

(a) The remedy suggested by James: Is one of you unhappy? Let him fall to prayer (James 5. 13).

(b) Prayer is our means of communicating with heaven, the dwelling-place and source of all happiness, without any admixture of sadness. This prayer has the power to draw down from heaven the divine consolations.

4. *The thought of heaven:*

This helps considerably to drive away sadness of heart. It lightens the burden of this life when we consider that it is an exile which leads to our real home. We are on our way home all the time and the journey is not really a long one.

5. *Despise the things of this world:*

This means that we should use them as God intends them to be used, with discretion and moderation, as a means of living. But they should never fill our heart and soul with disquiet. We have not been created for creatures but for God.

6. *The love of work:*

Work is a source of great joy and well-being for all. On the contrary, laziness is the source of all vice and brings sadness with it for that very reason.

G: A healthy sadness

Perfect sadness

1. This theme is studied by St Thomas (1-2. q. 39): We shall follow in his footsteps.

2. A lack of sadness would indicate a lack of sentiment or an error in judgement perhaps, by which a man does not consider sadness to be repugnant to human nature.

3. There is a type of sadness which is good. Aquinas reasons it out thus:

All that merits eternal life has within it the seeds of good; now we know from the words of Christ: Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted, that sadness will receive as a reward eternal happiness; therefore this same sadness contains within it the seeds of blessedness.

4. The reason for this goodness to be found in sadness.

(a) The basic reason is to be found in the fact that sadness is good when it comes from a detestation and a knowledge of evil.

(b) This is exactly what happens in the case of sorrow for sin; the intellect knows it for a great moral evil and the will detests it—with a consequent sadness which is both good and praise-worthy, as St Augustine says, because it leads to happiness in heaven.

Sadness a useful thing, as avcII as good

i. Evil sadness makes a man useless; while good sadness can move him to avoid some greater evil which should be avoided.

2. *Two reasons why weflee from something:*

(a) When the thing itself is bad—as in the case of sin:

Thus, the sadness of sin is a useful thing because it makes us avoid it in the future.

(b) St Paul sums this up:

Yes, even if I caused you pain by my letter, I am not sorry for it. Perhaps I was tempted to feel sorry, when I saw how my letter had caused you momentary pain, but now I am glad; not glad of the pain, but glad of the repentance the pain brought with it. Yours was a supernatural remorse, so that you were not in any way the losers through what we had done. Supernatural remorse leads to an abiding and salutary change of heart, whereas the world's remorse leads to death (2 Cor. 7. 8-10).

(c) The second reason:

This arises when the thing, although not evil in itself, is an occasion of sin:

i as exists at times in material goods, which may be good in themselves but which offer many occasions of sin;

ii. at times because a man loves it too much.

The sadness of the repentant sinners

i. This is the sadness which has filled heaven with saints and the Church with glory.

2 From the ven· gates of Eden there is a river of repentance which is due to the sinners who have been converted. St Peter

Magdalen, St Augustine, all found a salutary medicine for their sins in sorrow.

The sadness of the apostle

Jesus was sad in the Garden and apostolic souls feel the same sadness when they think of the reparation which needs to be made for the sins of others. Sinners themselves are often insensible to this feeling of sadness and need for reparation. We can make up for this.

H: The evil effects of sadness

The Scriptures mention it frequently: Prov. 17. 22; Ecclus. 30. 22 ff.

A general summary of these evil effects of sadness:

(a) It ruins the spiritual life:

It leads to weariness and lack of concentration on spiritual things—we become tired of trying to be good and may even fall into grievous sins.

(b) It makes a man brusque and insolent in his treatment of others:

i. it moves us to anger (St Gregory); makes us impatient with others;

ii. where there is bitterness and sadness there is no true judgement (St Gregory, *Moral.* 31).

(c) Gives the devil an occasion to tempt us:

When the devil finds us in this state it opens to him various possibilities—he can then tempt us very easily to idleness, indignation, envy of others, impatience. The sad man is a badly defended fortress, weakened on every side.

(d) It inclines the heart towards earthly pleasures:

Man desires happiness, and when he does not find it in God or the things of God he will look for it elsewhere. St Gregory says: Understand it well; if you do not find content and happiness in God and in spiritual things, then you will necessarily look for it in vile and sensual things, because man cannot live without some happiness.

(e) It can even weaken our physical nature:

Many bodily evils are now traced to sadness and worry.

(f) It is the worst evil in many ways:

i. because it is brother to doubt and anger;

ii. it saddens the Holy Spirit within us and makes prayer useless.

(g) We should do all we can to cleanse ourselves from this evil spirit of sadness, rejoicing always in the Lord no matter what happens to us.

I: Christ—our joy

Your sadness shall be turned into joy

This is the main theme of this passage of the Gospels. It appears three times, once in a parabolic form:

(a) Believe me when I tell you this, you will weep and lament while the world rejoices; you will be distressed, but your distress shall be turned into joy.

(b) A woman in childbirth feels distress, because her time has now come; but when she has borne her child, she does not remember the distress any longer, so glad is she that a man has been born into the world. So it is with you, you are distressed now; but one day I will see you again, and then your hearts will be glad; and your gladness will be one which nobody can take away from you (John 16. 21-22).

Christ, the cause of our joy

1. The sadness of which Christ spoke is one which will not last, it is only temporary. 'A little while.'

2. On the other hand, the joy will be eternal, 'one which nobody can take away from you . . A

3. What is the real cause of this joy?

(a) The sight of Jesus. ... I will see you again, and then your hearts will be glad. . . .

(b) Not merely will he see them; he will also take them with him to the place which he has prepared for them close to his Father (John 14. 3).

(c) Here Christ is referring to the joy of heaven which, unlike that of the world, is eternal.

The true joy in this life is Christ

i. Christ is also the cause of our joy here on earth:

(a) just as he was for the apostles—they were cowards without him, hiding from their enemies and very' sad;

(b) but they rejoiced again as soon as he was with them (John 20. 20).

2. No sooner did they receive the Holy Ghost at Pentecost than they were filled with the spirit of Christ.

(a) From then onwards, even in the midst of tribulations, they rejoiced (Acts 5. 41; 2 Cor. 7. 4).

(b) They constantly saw the Lord by faith.

(c) It was this vision by faith, more secure and certain than corporeal vision even, that was the real source of their joy and firmness.

We shall weep

1. The words of the Gospel must be applied to men of all times and places:

(a) To all Christians it is said: you will weep and lament. . . .

(b) Is there anyone entirely free from suffering? Is not sadness part of our human inheritance? Is not this earth always a valley of tears?

i. There exists a very real sadness which at times we try to hide; that of the sinner who finds himself oppressed by the thought of God's absence; who finds himself alone, his life destroyed by his vices.

ii. Another affliction takes hold of men when they find themselves misunderstood and misjudged; when they are persecuted, calumniated and wronged.

iii. We may add to the list illness, sufferings, economic difficulties, misery and misfortune of all kinds.

2. In one way or another the Master's words will be true: You will lament and weep . . . you are distressed now (John 16. 20-22).

We shall rejoice

1. But those other words of Christ are also true for us, too; I will see you again and then your hearts will be glad (John 16. 22).

(a) As in the case of the Apostles, at the Last Judgement Christ will be the consolation of those who have suffered for him.

(b) But even in this life, even while sufferings afflict us, Christ is still our joy and our consolation:

i. he is, if we see him (let us use that phrase) by faith;

ii. by that faith we contemplate him as a sacrifice for us all on the Cross, the Man of Sorrows (Isaias 53. 3);

iii. by faith we know that we form one Body with him, and therefore we have to share in his condition;

iv. by faith we know that he is our life and that we can do all things in him who strengthens us; that it is not we who suffer alone, but he who continues his passion in us.

2. All these truths are a healing balm for our wounds which will comfort us even as we weep. The saints, even though they had to suffer much, have always been the happiest of men, because they have always had a living faith in Christ.

The consolation of the word of God

I. The greater our faith the greater our consolation in time of distress.

(a) St Thomas says that our faith increases, either in so far as we know more of the truths of faith, or through the greater attention of the mind in prayer.

(b) We should teed ourselves more assiduously on the word of God, in sermons and by reading the Scriptures—as we do so our faith will increase by leaps and bounds and so will our consolation.

2. There has always been suffering in the world, but perhaps never as much as now:

(a) It would seem that the very material creation is sad; on all sides we find lack of peace and true tranquillity, disturbances, threats, worry.

(b) For this same reason we need Christ nowadays more than ever before. Either we shall live in him or we shall find ourselves condemned to suffer without consolation and almost with despair.

(c) For this same reason nowadays we must fortify ourselves even more with the word of God, that through it we may know Christ better and rejoice more in him.

J: Worldly pleasures

The joy of God or that of the world

1. Christ states the problem in universal terms: You will weep and lament while the world rejoices (John 16. 20).

2. Humanity of all time is divided into two camps:

(a) those who live in a sadness which is the seed of glory (St John Chrysostom);

(b) those who live in a worldly joy which is to be changed into sadness.

3. If in the time of this mortal life that sadness which was foretold by Christ has to be our lot, then let us study the world's pleasures, in order to flee from them and avoid the seed of eternal sadness.

The pleasures of this world are futile

I. The first disillusion which these pleasures bring is that they are so fleeting; the reason is to be found in their cause:

(a) Generally worldly pleasures are to be found only through riches in some way or other:

i. But this can only give us material good and pleasure, not spiritual (cf. Prov. 17. 16).

ii. They leave the heart unsatisfied (Eccles. 5. 9).

iii. They do not even give us those good things which are necessary for our material well-being, such as health.

2. *The second source of them is worldly honours:*

(a) These are also fleeting and false; the world often honours that which should really be despised, while it despises that which should be honoured.

(b) Even though they are just and sincere, they are still insufficient for the man who is honest with himself, a man who should work for something higher.

(c) Frequently they carry with them the danger of losing eternal honours which are the result of good works. These may be paid here on earth with a worldly honour and thus we lose the eternal reward.

3. *They are born of power and pride:*

(a) Power which is used for the service of others, in whatever order, when it fulfils correctly all the obligations imposed on it by duty, does not bring joy and pleasure, but rather suffering and the cross.

(b) Therefore those who rejoice only in the human pride of holding high office either fall heavily or else they do not find any consolation at all, not even in a clear conscience.

(c) The rejoicing is one which is founded on the flattery of a few and the hatred of many.

4. *The third source is in the pleasures of the flesh:*

(a) These leave behind them, very soon, nothing but disillusion and bitterness.

(b) They provoke desire for new pleasures, which in their turn open the way to new bitterness and dissatisfaction.

5. *They are bitter:*

The bitterness of poison may be attractive to the palate but deadly to life itself:

(a) Their evil consequences are sometimes apparent the very moment the pleasure has ceased.

(b) Would that they always led to the real bitterness of repentance for those pleasures which have been sinful.

6. *They are dangerous and culpable :*

(a) Dangerous to the body:

i. Because of the illnesses which often come from them.

ii. Damaged health is often the first result of these pleasures.

(b) Dangerous too, for the soul:

i. When they are sinful.

ii. In any case they are nearly always occasions of sin and create an atmosphere which is dangerous to virtue.

(c) Dangerous to society:

i. Because of the scandal which is attached to them.

ii. Because they usually imply a misuse of temporal goods for unworthy ends, often the ruin of a family, and injustice done to one's neighbour with no thought for social justice or even charity, because vain pleasure takes up all our money and time.

7. *They are brief:*

(a) Certain it is that never since man found a place on earth did the wrong-doer win lasting triumph; only for a little time does knavery bring him content (Job 20. 4-5).

(b) 1'he 'little while' of the Gospel is applied also to the pleasures of this world.

8. *They make us slaves:*

(a) He who lives for worldly pleasure does not understand true joy, those spiritual realities which are so important, God, virtue, religion, etc.—all these tire him.

(b) Pleasures dull the intellect.

(c) Idleness follows from them and accompanies them.

(d) They enervate and blind a man to the better things of life:

This leads to our damnation—which is eternal slavery' in hell, where all is horror, hatred and sadness.

K: The Presence of God

I will see you again and then your hearts will be glad (John 16. 22)

1. The presence of God in this life gives to souls sweetness and joy, just as the vision of God face to face rejoices the souls in heaven.

2. God is present everywhere, and often this truth is either not appreciated by Christians or else it is not translated into terms of life itself. It becomes a mere formula learnt by heart and repeated without meaning.

3. Yet those who know' of this presence and, those who know how to sec God by faith in this way, have in their hands a possible source of the most perfect joy in this life.

4. Nor is the thought and use of the presence a thing reserved for those souls who are well on the way to perfection:

(a) It is necessary for all.

(b) It makes us feel how good and sweet the Lord is, it is the soul of all our good works.

(c) It helps us to pray with fervour and changes the fulfilment of our ordinary daily duties into a constant prayer.

(d) Without it man's activities, however good they may appear to be, are not worth a great deal in God's sight.

God present everywhere

i. This is a truth which is constantly represented for us in Sacred Scripture:

(a) Where can I go, then, to take refuge from thy spirit, to hide from thy view? If I should climb up to heaven, thou art there; if I sink down to thc world beneath, thou art present still. If I should take Hight at dawn of day, and come to rest at the furthest ends of the sea, still would I find thee beckoning to me, thy right hand upholding me (Ps. 138. 7-10).

(b) He is not far from any one of us; it is in him that we live, and move, and have our being (Acts 17. 27-28).

2. He is everywhere as a loving Father, in comparison with whom all earthly fathers are as nothing; he is quick to have compassion on our miseries, heaps benefits on us, extends his shielding wings over us as the eagle over her chicks.

3. When we are in the state of grace there is, in the soul, a special and most wonderful presence of God.

(a) This is demanded by the very friendship which then exists between us both; then the Trinity dwells in our soul as a friend.

(b) This presence is the foundation of our happiness on earth and is, as it were, heaven on earth. To walk in God's presence is to be in heaven and already blessed.

This presence in our minds and hearts

1. *Presence in the mind:*

(a) It is, as it were, a sustained and continual looking at God with love; a recollection of mind and a lifting up of the mind to God; at the same time a separation from those things which could distract us from him.

(b) It is not enough to do this once in the morning—it should be practised several times in the course of the day, while all our other actions are directed towards God.

2. *In the heart:*

(a) This is the more important, the former is but a means towards It.

(b) From the heart must come love and then good works.

(c) It means a constant effort to love him and to live in obedience to his commands.

i. It is the easiest possible thing for all.

ii. It may not always be possible to be at prayer, or to think of God at all times, but it is always possible to do his will in all things, to accept with love whatever he sends to try us, to hear his voice in that of our superiors—at every moment of the day he makes his will known to us in some way or other.

iii. In a word, it is to live in love with God; this love will lead us to lift up our minds and heart to him constantly.

A practice easy for all

I. It is merely a simple and loving reminder to us that God is within us. There is no need for sensible images, exterior acts, great use of the imagination or interior recollection which could tire us and which is impossible at times.

It will not take us away from our normal duties; on the contran', it will make them easier and more agreeable to us.

2. Because it is loving that does not imply any particular acts. It is a hidden desire of the heart to do all things in such a way that our actions may be pleasing to him. It is a desire to love and adore him, and to sen e him through the things we have to do.

3. We consider him, not as he is present in every place, but simply as he is within us.

4. Accordingly, this is the easiest of all exercises of piety and the most advantageous.

The practical method

1. This is constant desire and resolution to long for God, to live in him without reserve; this should be repeated frequently.

2. We must accustom ourselves, by frequent acts of humility, to do all things in this presence. This is not easy to acquire at once. It needs constant practice.

3. If we should fall into any imperfection we should try to pay it back to him at once by an act of reparation, repentance and love.

4. We must enter into ourselves from time to time to seek out this presence and remind ourselves of it, as did St Teresa and St Augustine.

5. We must begin all our actions by lifting up our minds to God present within us.

6. We should make fen ent aspirations and acts of love from time to time. These can be very short, so long as they are fenent.

7. Every night, before going to sleep, we should make a special act of recollection of this presence.

L: Hope

Human and natural hope

i. This consists in a confidence that we shall attain some good which is difficult yet possible; it relies on our own powers and on those of others who will help us.

2. *Life is one long hope:*

(a) Up to the very last moment of his life a man has always hoped for something or other.

(b) The only difference between the energetic man and the lazy one is that the latter waits for this to happen while the former puts all his energy into attaining success.

i. The young man hopes to develop his future;

ii. he who starts a family hopes to be happy therein;

iii. the father hopes for his children and their future;

iv. all hope in their work.

(c) He who hopes for nothing is in a backwater, far from reality and on the verge of despair.

3. *The insufficiency of human hope:*

(a) The objects hoped for are insufficient; no created thing can satisfy our hopes completely.

(b) Because of the insecurity of the forces on which we can count:

i. our own strength soon dies;

ii. the help given us by others supposes a generosity and constancy which usually fail in the long run;

iii. we have always to reckon with original sin and man's inconstancy.

(c) Also human hope cannot offer us sufficient consolation in times of great disasters. Modern civilization promises much in the way of material improvements, but what do these mean to a young man who lies paralysed or a mother who has just lost her child?

4. For this reason man should seek those good things which do not pass away and those aids to attain them which cannot fail.

The infinite—object of hope

1. Our hope reaches out to God himself, in whose help it rests (2-2. q. 17. a. i. c).

2. From God we cannot hope for anything mean or petty:

The good which we hope to attain from God properly and chiefly is the infinite good, which is proportionate to the power of the divine helper, since it belongs to an infinite power to lead anyone to an infinite good. Such a good is eternal life, which consists in the enjoyment of God himself. For we should hope from him nothing less than himself, since his goodness, whereby he imparts things to his creatures, is no less than his essence. Therefore the proper and principal object of hope is eternal happiness *{ibid. ad art.* 2).

The infallible certainty of the motives for this hope

I. The object of our happiness is difficult to attain, because it is beyond our natural powers, nevertheless, it is possible.

Hope looks on God as its last end and also as the efficient cause who can lead us to that end, by his help *(ibid. ad art.* 5).

2. We are weak and changing; there are many obstacles and they are great.

(a) However, we do not hope in our own powers, nor even on the state of grace (because the sinner can and should hope); but rather on God's mercy and omnipotence of which we can be certain (2-2. q. 18. a. 4).

(b) We know God's power and also that his mercy has placed that power at our disposal in order to reach salvation.

(c) We also know his fidelity to his promises.

i. For this reason Christian art has not found a better symbol for hope than that of the anchor, which holds the ship in times of storm.

ii. We may quote one text in support of this: Not that God will play you false; he will not allow you to be tempted beyond your powers. With the temptation itself, he will ordain the issue of it, and enable you to hold your own (1 Cor. 10. 13).

iii. God wills sincerely that all men should be saved—not just a certain number.

Consequences

1. Not that I count these present sufferings as the measure of that glory which is to be revealed in us (Rom. 8. 18).

2. Life is short. There has always been only 'a little while'.

We can all say with Job, in the midst of any great temptations or suffering: This at least I know, that one lives on who will vindicate me, rising up from the dust when the last day comes. Once more my skin shall clothe me, and in my flesh I shall have sight of God. . . . Deep in my heart is this hope reposed (Job. 19. 25-27).

3. Therefore we should lift up our hearts—*Sursum corda!*

M: The peak of the Gospel

1. *A definite liturgical period:*

(a) Such is the period which begins with the Gospel of this Sunday and ends with that of Pentecost. There is a unity of spirit, ideas, theme and background.

They are all gospels which are taken from the Last Supper discourse; they have for a common background our life in Christ through the influence of the Holy Spirit.

(b) These themes are generally little known by the faithful.

2. *The peak of the Gospel:*

(a) In general it may be said that the sermon of the Cenacle is the peak of divine revelation to men.

i. We have been led up through the passion of Christ to these themes which are high in the list of spiritual values and which arc resplendent with glory.

ii. The spiritual affinity between St John and St Paul is shown clearly here, because many of the themes dealt with arc concerned with the Mystical Body, of which St Paul is later to be the chief exponent.

(b) **The Sermon on the Mount and the Last Supper** discourse:

We may say that the whole of the gospel teaching is enclosed in these two sermons. The first is an introduction to the Gospel message; the second is the perfecting and crowning of that teaching.

3. *Brief comparison between the two discourses:*

(a) **Divine providence:**

i. In the sermon on the Mount we hear of it in a general way, God provides us with our temporal goods (Matt. 6. 30-32). At the Last Supper the accent is on the abundance of spiritual gifts (John 16. 23).

ii. On the Mount the Father promises to give us all that we need, so that we shall not want for food and clothing (Matt. 7. 7-11); at the Last Supper we are told to ask through and with Jesus that our joy may be full (John 16. 24).

iii. On the Mount we are told that we should not be solicitous for the morroxv, because our daily bread will he give to us (Matt. 6. 34); at the Last Supper we are promised for the morrow a dwelling place in the Father's house (John 14. 2-3), prepared by Christ for us.

(b) **Charity:**

i. On the Mount men are considered as brothers, sons of the Father in heaven (Matt. 7. 12); in the Upper Room as branches of the True Vine, Christ, his special friends to whom he communicates his secrets (John 15. 1-8).

ii. On the Mount the Father loves us as he loves all his creatures; (Matt. 6. 30); at the Last Supper he is represented as loving us in a special way, because we have loved Christ (John 16. 27).

iii. On the Mount the love for our neighbour should lead us to give him our cloak if he asks us for our tunic (Matt. 5. 38 ff.); at the Last Supper love should lead us to wash our brother's feet and give our lives for him as did Christ (John 13. 13-14).

(c) Eternal life:

i. On the Mount we are reminded that we have a God in heaven (Matt. 6. 32); at the Supper we are told that the Father will come to dwell within us (John 14. 16).

ii. On the Mount we are told that life and the body are worth more than food and clothing (Matt. 6. 25); while at the Supper we are promised eternal life and we are told in what it consists—in an intimate knowledge of God and his messenger, Christ (John 17. 2-3).

iii. The Sermon on the Mount includes the Our Father; while at the last Supper the sacerdotal prayer of Christ pleads for the eternal life of glory for all those who love the Father and are one with him and with the Son. It is a heavenly prayer which gives us the promise of glory (John 17. 1-5).

iv. The discourse on the Mount is essentially that of the Father, and the figure of the Father fills the three chapters of St Matthew. That of the Supper is the sermon of the Blessed Trinity. In the four chapters of St John the indications and allusions to the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are constant.

4. *The sermon of the Holy Ghost:*

(a) The sermon at the Last Supper is in a special way that of the Holy Ghost:

i. We are told that he will come to complete the work of Christ.

ii. We have revealed to us the effects of the Holy Spirit in the soul of the just man.

(b) For that reason the Church uses these gospels as a preparation for Pentecost.

5. *Lamentable ignorance:*

(a) Many Christians are ignorant of the themes of the Last Supper discourse, of the glorious life of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

i. A great proportion of the faithful increase their devotional exercises during Lent, and this is an excellent thing—we can never meditate too much on the Passion and Death of Christ; however, we should assist with equal love and devotion at those celebrations which follow Lent and which celebrate the glory of Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

ii. The Holy Ghost has been called the forgotten Person of the Trinity, and this is only too often true. There should be greater efforts made to preach the doctrine of the Holy Ghost and of his work in the soul.

(b) This devotion is a present need:

i. it responds to the needs of the time and the desire for a deeper spiritual life which exists in many souls;

ii. it is the foundation of the mystical life and of a devout religious life in general;

iii. it has been the object of constant reminders from the Popes.

6. Leo XIII, *Divinum illud Munus* (1897).

(a) A general scheme of this Encyclical:

i. The Pope laments the fact that the Holy Ghost is little known and loved by many Christians.

ii. He studies the Person of the Holy Spirit in detail.

iii. As a practical measure to increase devotion to the Holy Ghost he urges the faithful to attend religiously during the Novena to the Holy Ghost which should be celebrated on the eight days before Pentecost.

(b) Another excellent preparation for Pentecost is a detailed study of these gospels which the Church uses on these Sundays before Pentecost and a constant preaching of their main themes.

N: The Consoler Spirit

A duty of preachers

1. Wherefore all preachers and those having care of souls should remember that it is their duty to instruct their people more diligently and more fully about the Holy Ghost . . . what should be chiefly dwelt upon and clearly explained is the multitude and greatness of the benefits which have been bestowed, and are so constantly bestowed upon us by this Divine Giver. . . .

2. Speaking of the people's love for the Holy Spirit Leo XIII says: Christians may do this more effectively if they will daily strive to know Him to love Him and to implore Him more earnestly. . . .

3. Perhaps there are still to be found among them, even nowadays, some who, if asked, as were those of old by St Paul the Apostle, whether they have received the Holy Ghost, might answer in like manner: We have not so much as heard if there be a Holy Ghost (*Divinum illud Munus,* Leo XIII, 1897).

4. The fruit of experience:

(a) shows us that there are immense benefits to be obtained by preaching on the Holy Spirit, his gifts, the infused virtues, the life of grace, and the grades of the spiritual life.

(b) This preaching is especially fruitful in the case of university students, professional men and Catholic action workers.

(c) The doctrine of the Mystical Body, well explained, has definitely won back from communist ideas many workers, some of them most gifted.

The feast of the Holy Ghost

I. There is, properly speaking, no special feast of the Holy Ghost, as there is none of the Father and the Son (Leo XIII, *ibid.*).

Innocent XII did not accept the suggestion that there should be a special Feast in honour of God the Father; nor does the Church celebrate a special least to commemorate the divinity of the Son-only those which commemorate the Incarnate Word of God.

2. There is a feast (Pentecost) which celebrates the coming of the Holy Ghost, his mission to souls and to the Church.

The termination of the redemptive mission

1. *Leo XIII expresses this admirably in his encyclicaljust quoted:*

(a) the Holy Ghost was given the mission of concluding the redemptive work of Christ;

(b) that is why Pope Leo invokes him to finish the work of the Pope in the same way.

2. *The Holy Spirit is our defender (advocate) consoler and teacher:*

(a) He is our teacher who completes the work of Christ, the supreme Teacher.

(b) In this sense he completes the work of revelation too.

3. *The double influence:*

(a) The Holy Spirit exercises over us a double influence:

(b) One direct and personal, in the depths of the soul of each one of us, in so far as he dwells there and our bodies become his temple

(c) The other he exercises through our spiritual superiors and rulers, Popes and bishops, who direct the souls of the faithful.

(d) Pius XII has brought this out clearly in the encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi.*

The benefits of the Holy Spirit

Here are some, briefly explained, which could form the themes for preaching on this and the following Sundays.

(a) Adoption:

The spirit you have now received is not, as of old, a spirit of slavery, to govern you by fear; it is the spirit of adoption which makes us cry out Abba, Father (Rom. 8. 15).

(b) Regeneration:

What is bom by spiritual birth is a thing of spirit, as Christ said to Nicodemus (John 3. 6).

(c) Indwelling:

i. The indwelling of the Trinity in the soul is attributed in a special way to the Holy Ghost.

ii. This presence is one of love, which is only given to those souls in the state of grace—and the Holy Spirit is the spirit of love.

(d) Temples of God:

Temples of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 6. 19).

(e) The first gift of God:

In him are all the other gifts; for which reason the very forgiving of sins is attributed, as a gift of God, to the Holy Spirit.

(f) Secret and mysterious inspirations:

i. They are smooth as a gentle wind, and like that wind they blow where and how they please.

ii. It is the constant communication of the Holy Spirit to the soul, so often neglected, unknown or unheeded.

iii. So necessary for the individual life and for the collective.

The spirit of unity

Let this be the last theme on the Holy Spirit—his unitive power:

(a) He gives life to and unifies the souls of men.

(b) The modem world needs such unity more than ever before.

(c) Let preachers prepare themselves for their task under the guidance of tliis Spirit.

(d) We may conclude as did Leo XIII: The intercession of the Blessed Virgin was of great avail both in the mystery of the Incarnation and in the coming of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles. May she continue to strengthen our prayers with her suffrages, that, in the midst of all the stress and trouble of nations, those divine prodigies may be happily revived by the Holy Ghost, which were foretold in the words of David: Send forth thy spirit and they shall be created, and thou shall renew the face of the earth *(ibid.)*.

Fourth Sunday after Easter

THE PROMISE OF THE PARACLETE

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: James i. 17-21 Gospel: John 16. 5-14

Texts which refer to the world

I. *What is the world?*

(a) The earthly condition of men:

You belong to earth; I to heaven; you to this world, I to another. John 8. 23.

Before the paschal feast began, Jesus already knew that the time had come for his passage from this world to the Father. He still loved those who were his own, whom he was leaving in the world, and he would give them the uttermost proof of his love. John 13. 1.

It was from the Father I came out, when I entered the world, and now I am leaving the world, and going on my way to the Father. John 16. 28.

(b) Evil men who follow the counsels of the world:

The world . . . does hate me, because I denounce it for its evil doings. John 7. 7.

Sentence is now being passed on this world; now is the time when the prince of this world is to be cast out. John 12. 31.

I have no longer much time for converse with you; one is coming who has power over the world, but no hold over me. John 14. 30.

The Lord judges us and chastises us, so that we may not incur, as this world incurs, damnation. 1 Cor. 11. 32.

2. *Its dangers:*

(a) Concupiscence and pride of life:

What does the world offer? Only gratification of corrupt nature, gratification of the eye, the empty pomp of living . . . 1 John 2. 16.

The world and its gratifications pass away; the man who does God's will outlives them forever. 1 John 2. 17.

(b) Its friendship—enmity with God:

Wantons, have you never been told that the world's friendship means enmity with God, and the man who would have the world for his friend makes himself God's enemy? James 4. 4.

3. *Christ and the world:*

(a) Christ is not of the world:

I have given them thy message, and the world has nothing but hatred fur them, because they do not belong to the world, as I, too, do not belong to the world. John 17. 14. Cf. John 8. 23.

(b) Christ, the light of the World:

There is one who enlightens every soul born into the world; he was die true light. John 1. 9.

And now once more Jesus spoke to them, I am the light of the world, he said. He who follows me can never walk in darkness; he will possess the light which is life. John 8. 12.

As long as I am in the world I am the world's light. John 9. 5.

(c) But the world did not know him:

He, through whom the world was made, was in the world, and the world treated him as a stranger. John 1. 10.

(d) The world hates Christ and those who are his:

The world cannot be expected to hate you, but it does hate me, because I denounce it for its evil doings. John 7. 7.

If the world hates you, be sure that it hated me before it learned to hate you. If you belonged to the world, the world would know you for its own and love you; it is because you do not belong to the world, because I have singled you out from the midst of the world, that the world hates you. John 15. 18-19.

No, brethren, do not be surprised that the world should hate you. i John 3. 13.

(e) God loved the world:

God so loved the world that he gave up his only begotten son so that those who believe in him may not perish, but may have eternal life. John 3. 16. Cf. 3. 17, 12. 47.

(f) Christ, victor over the world:

I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you will find only tribulation; but take courage, I have overcome the world. John 16. 33.

4. *Our conduct face to face with the world:*

(a) We must not love it:

You are strong, with God's word dwelling in you always; you have gained your victory over the evil one. 1 John 2. 14.

(b) What does it matter what the world thinks?

How is a man the better for it, if he gains the whole world at the cost of losing his own soul? Matt. 16. 26.

(c) We must crucify it:

God forbid that I should make a display of anything, except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world stands crucified to me and I to the world. Gal. 6. 14.

(d) Faith, the conqueror of the world:

Whatever takes its origin from God must needs triumph over the world ; our faith, that is the triumphant principle which triumphs over the world. He alone triumphs over the world who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. 1 John 5. 4-5.

SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LITURGICAL

A: The same characteristics as the other Sundays

The fourth Sunday after Easter presents the same liturgical characteristics as the others—the paschal note runs through them all, together with the triumph *of* Christ in glory and the consequent joy. Together with that we have the announcement *of* the coming of the Holy Spirit, narrated in the Gospel and repeated in the communion.

B : The knowledge of the Holy Spirit

In private piety the Holy Spirit has few real friends. But if that same piety were founded in the Scriptures and the texts of the Popes then He would have a special place. Pius XII did not destroy private devotions, but he did insist on the great purification of soul and advantages which come from full participation in the liturgical devotion of the Church.

Leo XIII, in his encyclical on the Holy Spirit, laments bitterly that Christians as a whole have a very poor devotion to the Holy Ghost. They often use his name in their devotions, but their faith in him is surrounded by a cloud of darkness. That is why the Popes insist that all preachers and those who have the care of souls, should do all in their power to teach their people the truths about the Holy Spirit. For that reason the preacher, faced with today's sermon, should sound the alarm, as it were, remembering the phrase used in the Communion: When the Paraclete shall come, the spirit of truth. He should urge the faithful to plead with Christ in their prayers, through the intercession of Mary, that he would prepare their souls to receive in a fitting manner the one who is to teach us all truth.

C: The consolation of the Holy Spirit

Here it might be useful to the preacher to remember how the liturgy presents the Holy Spirit to us as the consoler. In the liturgical notes for the Sunday within the Octave of the Ascension we shall deal with him as the spirit of truth. Here we shall dwell more on those texts of the liturgy which present him to us as the consoler.

God is the supreme consoler: God, consoler of those who weep ... says the Collect for the feast of St Monica; there is no distinction of Persons. However, the office of consoler is appropriated to the Holy Ghost as the spirit of love between the Father and the Son. The sequence for the Mass of Pentecost calls him the best of all consolers. He is our rest in times of labour; refreshment in the heat, consolation in time of mourning. Not merely does he take away our sadness but also he causes us joy: we pray in the collect: Grant us in the same Spirit to be always truly wise and ever to rejoice in his consolations. He gives us spiritual energy, power not to be beaten down under trials but to overcome all evils. To obtain this special consolation we should all try to prepare ourselves, as did the Apostles in the L pper Room, for his coming.

II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

A: The Epistle: James 1. 17-21

1. *The person of James:*

What we know of him from his epistle and from other sources show us that he was, in every sense of the word, a 'character'. He was a Jew by nature and in character, a lover of the Temple. He dedicates his letter to all the twelve tribes in the *Diaspora*. The style is entirely Jewish, especially perhaps the two passages from chapter 2, which might come from any descriptive contemporary Arab literature.

The prayer of faith has to be without hesitation: One who hesitates is like a wave out at sea, driven to and fro by the wind (1. 6). He is unyielding where sins of the tongue and faith without works are concerned : Of what use is it, my brethren, if a man claims to have faith, and has no deeds to show for it ? (2. 14). He is, in a word, austere and penitent, but behind it all there is that savour of charity and love for the brethren.

2. *The argument:*

Let no one say that God tempts him; that is what he is out to prove and then to apply to a variety of things. God does not tempt us because:

(a) From God nothing comes to us which is not good.

(b) He has given birth to us in the spiritual life because he loved

us (v. 18), and it would be opposed to such generation and love to urge us towards sin and death.

The beginning of this re-birth was the Gospel preaching; therefore we must receive it (v. 21) and practise it, not with a lot of discussion as if we were rabbis or doctors of the law', but by listening with attention to its teachings, speaking little and never from anger, accepting the Gospel meekly (w. 19-21), as the Sermon on the Mount should have been accepted.

The letter can be divided into two parts, clearly separated, each of which is capable of many profound applications of general interest. The first part has an obvious connection with the supreme gift of God of which the Gospel speaks to us. As our perfect gift, the Holy Ghost comes to us from above.

3. *The text:*

(a) Whatever gifts are worth having . . .

These come to us from above. The best interpretation of the idea behind the Apostle's mind is that all which comes from God is good —therefore temptation, which in itself is evil, cannot come from above.

(b) Sent down by the Father of all that gives light. ..

This image gives rise to the following one. The idea is that all good things come to us from the Creator of the stars and the light; therefore there is no need for us to lose confidence in him or to think that he will change, as they do, from light to shade.

(c) The Father . . .

The Greek gives the idea of light, a sur ... but is not James also thinking of the gifts themselves ? Grace, as opposed to concupiscence, light as opposed to darkness ?

(d) With whom there can be no change, no swerving from his course .. .

The idea of swerving from his course implies the shadow cast by the stars in their movements. God is the author of all light, and cannot send us the darkness of sin.

(e) It was his will to give us birth . . .

Birth as opposed to the sin of verse 15.

(f) His true word . . .

The word of the Gospel, which produces faith in the intellect and that soft attraction in the will which gives rise to hope.

(g) First-fruits . . .

The chosen part of his creation and the greatest, not merely because of man's intellect, but also because he has a share in the very nature of God.

(h) It is for us men to be ready listeners, slow to speak our minds...

This refers to the preaching of the Gospel, but it can also have a universal application. Silence often receives praise from the Scriptures. (Cf. Ecclus. 1. 30, 20. 5.) Some have rendered this verse as meaning prompt to listen to God and to obey (J *Lapide).*

(i) Slow to take offence . . .

He is still talking about the discussion into which the Doctors of the Jewish law allowed themselves to be drawn so readily.

(j) Rid yourselves, then, of all defilement, of all the ill-will that...

The idea is that since we have received God's revelation we should reject sin altogether. We have the true light and life—what more do we need or want ?

B: The Gospel: John 16. 5-14

Pentecost appears in the liturgy, and that is possibly the reason why, on this Sunday, we read a piece of the Last Supper discourse which comes before that read last Sunday. This gospel is difficult both to understand and to explain to the people, because if w. 8-11 are obscure, the rest of the passage contains references to some of the most difficult trinitarian theology.

(a) None of you is asking me, Where is it thou art going ...

Their sadness at his previous words has been so great that they do not ask him where he is going. When Thomas asked he received an obscure reply which they did not understand, nor do they repeat that question here. Do not allow sadness to overcome you, is our Lord's advice to them. Ask the Father and he will enlighten you as to his providence. You will then see that love directs everything he does.

(b) It is better for you I should go away . . .

It is an apparent paradox, not always clear to one who is suffering. It was convenient that Christ should go from them, so that the Holy Spirit should come. There was no incompatibility between his staying with them and the coming of the Holy Ghost—except that of divine providence, in the decrees of which the mission *of* Christ was anterior to that of the Spirit. The work of the latter was to complete the former, and to help the apostles in their mission.

Again, the coming of the Spirit is the effect of the death and resurrection of Christ, in whom all things are restored and especially the full riches of supernatural life, enclosing as it does greater graces than the ruin caused by sin. On the other hand, the coming of the Spirit does not imply the absence *of* Christ, but only that of his sacred humanity, since the Word, who is inseparable from the

other Persons of the Trinity, will also dwell with them in the souls of the just.

It is convenient that I should leave you so far as my visible presence is concerned, because while you still see me in the flesh there will always be something human in your affection for me. That is why you have tried to dissuade me from accepting the passion.

It is convenient for all souls that there should be times when sensible devotion is missing and sorrow tries them. Also, as St Thomas of λ illanova says, it is convenient that Christ should leave this world so far as his visible presence is concerned, in order to berin his work of eternal mediation next to his Father.

(c) The Paraclete . . .

The mission of the Holy Spirit is well indicated by the names given to him : advocate, defender, witness, consoler and helper. He will help and defend the apostles in their preaching, and will accuse their persecutors of sin against God.

(d) and it will be for him to prove the world wrong, about sin, and about rightness of heart, and about judging:

Here the difficult passages begin. What is this rightness of heart (usually translated by the word justice) ? How will the Holy Ghost carry out this task ?

To prove the world wrong means to cast their sin in their faces—and that sin is first of all that of the Jews who refused to accept Christ's teaching. According to St Augustine, Christ chose this sin above all others because, since faith is the first step towards justification, to reject that makes it impossible to pardon any other sins, while he who believes is easily justified.

This task was carried out through the Holy Spirit and by means of the wonderful spreading of the faith, which of itself indicated the truth of the new doctrine, as Gamaliel pointed out. He also did it in a solemn way when, in the Councils, he inspired the definite terms in which the doctrine of Christ's birth, redemptive mission and so on were formulated.

(e) About rightness of heart: I am going back to my Father, and you are not to see me any more :

The Holy Spirit will demonstrate the truth of this in the way we have just pointed out. There is also an indication here of the second coming of Christ as judge of all mankind. Now' will take place that triumphant mediation in heaven which will end with the last judgement.

(f) About judging: he who rules this world has had sentence passed on him already:

The ruler of this world is the devil, both here and in 12. 31. He is the ruler of those w'orldly people who have put their end in

earthly pleasures. Lie has been completely defeated, because, although he managed to bring sin and death into the world, Christ could cry out from the cross: Death, where is thy victory? Death, where is thy sting (1 Cor. 15. 55)? While the Jews who had stood at the foot of the cross went back to their houses convinced that they had won a great victory, the Father in heaven was at that very moment pronouncing a terrible sentence against them and those who follow in their footsteps throughout the ages. The Holy Spirit will make this sentence known in the manner we have already indicated, so that those who wish to avoid it have even yet time to do so.

We may quote a passage from Schuster-Holzammer (cf. *Historia Biblia,* tome 2, *note* 9, *ll.* 362): 'The preaching and miracles of the Apostles and their successors, the wonderful diffusion and conservation of the Church, will give such a palpable proof of the divinity of Christianity that unbelief will no longer have any excuse. Christ, through his glorious ascension and his triumph over the powers of this world, over hell and over the hearts of men, will be recognized as the Just One, the fount and cause of all justice, while through the defeat of paganism and the transformation of the world, the victory of Christ over Satan will appear on the face of the earth, together with his victory over sin, death and hell; which will be a proof, in their turn, of his future coming as judge of all men.'

The Holy Spirit continues this work of proof even nowadays, because there are individuals, groups and even nations who consider Christ's doctrine prejudicial to the world and to humanity. He continues it also in the souls of the individuals, enlightening them concerning these same three things, sin, justice, and judgement.

(g) I have still much to say to you . . .

The Holy Spirit would illuminate the minds of the apostles to a more perfect understanding of the truths of faith which Christ had taught them, just as he will illuminate us with regard to those truths which we hear in sermons and through our reading. Normally we are converted or advance in sanctity, not through hearing new truths, but through a deeper understanding of those we already know by a kind of intuition or penetration of them which is an effect of the graces given by the Holy Spirit.

(h) He will make plain to you what is still to come:

It would seem that our Lord is referring to those persecutions which lie ahead for his apostles and the Church, in which they need not worry about what they should say, because the Holy Spirit will put the right words into their mouths. However, we need not exclude altogether the idea of the total development of the Church and the gift of prophecy.

SECTION III. THE FATHERS

I. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM [m *loco*]·

1. *Exegesis:*

(a) Verses 4-6:

The apostles, now firm in their strength, can receive the announcement of future persecutions; but in spite of that strength they are so cast down on hearing it that they cannot even ask him a question. Sadness can be useful; but when it is born of human sufferings it is useless.

(b) Verse 8:

The miracles of Christ should have been sufficient to convince them but 'they will be condemned with even greater motive when they have witnessed the wonders which shall be done in my name. . . . Now they can say: it is the son of the carpenter, whose father and mother we know; but when they see death destroyed, evil undone, nature strengthened, devils cast out and the ineffable largesse given by the Spirit... what will they say ? The Father gave testimony of me and the Spirit also will give it.'

(c) *Ibid.* : **sin** :

It means, I will remove from them every excuse and will make it plain that, because of their sin, they do not deserve pardon.

(d) Verse 10: of justice:

Which means to say: What will they be able to say in defence when the Holy Spirit makes it clear that I have gone (to the Father) not for a brief while, but to remain there—a fact which is hinted at in the words: you are not to see me any more.

(e) About judging . . .

They said that I had a devil, and now they will see the victory I have won over Satan, whom I tread under foot; and not I alone, but also those who belong to me.

(f) Verses 12-14:

Is the Holy Spirit greater than thou, since at the moment we are not capable of receiving these truths and he is the only one who can prepare us for them? Is his power greater and more efficacious? No; and the proof of it is that: he will derive from me what he makes plain to you. My knowledge and his are one and the same.

(g) He will bring honour to me . . .

Which, means the same thing as: he will guide you into all truth. The fullness of truth is my glory, but is it not fitting that I should

• Cf. Hom. 88.

sing my own praises while still clothed in mortal flesh; therefore the task has been assigned to the Holy Spirit, who will work greater miracles even than mine.

2. *The bonds of love:*

See for yourselves how strong is this bond of love; how it makes one man unconquerable; how one man becomes many, to the extent even of being the same in many places, in both Rome and Persia. That which is impossible to nature, love can achieve . .. see what expansion love grants to us; for the wonder lies in this fact, that one can become a thousand. . . . Let us consider the matter from another point of view. Let us suppose that there is a man who has no friends. . . . What sort of life is that? Though he may be a rich man, abounding in wealth and luxury, with endless possessions, yet he is still entirely alone and defenceless. It is not thus with those who have friends. Though they may be poor they have more resources than the rich; and what a man will not dare to say in his own defence a friend will say for him. What he cannot provide by his own power he can do through another, and more. Thus he owns the means of happiness and security. No great harm can come to one who is guarded by so many spears. No emperor has such zealous guards as these. His soldiers watch through necessity and fear, while these do it through love and kindness—and love is far stronger than fear. Thus a man has more trust in his friends than in himself, and trusting them as he does, he is afraid of no one.

Let us begin then to acquire these riches. The poor man that he may be comforted in his poverty; the rich that he may hold his riches in security; the ruler that he may govern in safety; the subject that he may have kind rulers. . . . It is because of this that we embrace each other during the sacred Mysteries; that the many may be one. We make prayer in common for those who are not initiated into our secrets; we pray for the sick, for the fruits of the earth, land and sea. This is the power of love, in prayer, in the Mysteries, in our exhortations. This is the cause of all good things. If we abide in this love with care then we shall do all things well in our lives and shall advance to that kingdom which we all desire to attain.

II. ST CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA♦

1. *The mission of the Holy Spirit:*

All that the Lord had to do on earth was now completed; one thing remained, that we should become partakers of the divine nature of the Word, or rather, that, giving up our old life, we should be changed to another, reformed into the newness of life which is pleasing to God. However, it was not possible to do this except

♦Cf. Hom. 'in Joanncm'.

through the coming and the possession of the Holy Spirit. The most fitting time for the mission of the Spirit and his descent upon us was the present, when Christ our Saviour was to go from our midst. For as long as Christ remained bodily with those who followed him, he appeared to them as the Giver of every gift. But when it was time for him to go to the Father, then he was to be present to his faithful followers through the Spirit dwelling in their hearts by faith, so that, possessing him, we might cry Abba, Father, and advance in every virtue. Having within us the invincible Spirit, we would then be found strong and invincible against all the snares of Satan.

For it is easy to show, from the Old and from the New Testament, that the Holy Spirit changes the hearts of those in whom he wills to dwell and abide, restoring to them newness of life. Samuel, in his inspired words to Saul, says: And the spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee, and thou shalt be changed into another man (1 Kings 10. 6). The Blessed Paul says: Now the Lord is a spirit. And where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. It is given to us, all alike, to catch the glory' of the Lord as in a mirror, with faces unveiled; and so we become transformed into the same likeness, borrowing glory from that glory, as the spirit of the Lord enables us (2 Cor. 3. 17-18).

See, then, how the Spirit of God transforms those in whom he lives! He turns them aside easily from their taste for earthly things, in order to dwell on those which are proper to heaven; from an unmanly cowardice he transforms them to a courageous state of mind. We surely cannot doubt that the disciples were so changed and so strengthened by the Spirit that they were in no way dismayed by the attacks of those who persecuted them, holding fast all the time to that love which is in Christ. What the Saviour said then is true: It is better for you if I go away. For it was then the hour appointed for the coming of the Spirit....

He reveals to them what it is that the Spirit will do: it will be for him to prove the world wrong, about sin; and about rightness of heart, and about judging. He also teaches us clearly what form the reproach contained in these words will take. . . .

The reproach of sin is put first. In what manner will he convince the world? Once those who love Christ, that is the just, arc convinced of sin, namely, that he will condemn the world, which means the ignorant and those who continue in their unbelief, those held fast in the clutches of the pleasures of this world and who are therefore all enslaved by their own vices and must die because of their offences. God will not be a respecter of persons; to some in this world he will grant his spirit without cause, while to others it will not be granted at all. fie will have the Paraclete only in those who arc worthy of him, who in perfect faith worship him as God, while they confess that he is the creator and Lord of the universe.

About rightness of heart (he says) I am going back to my bather and you arc not to see me any more. I le shall fittingly give his wisdom to those who have believed in Christ after his resurrection as being rightly and truly justified. For they received him as true God, though they had not seen him, believing that he is enthroned with the Father. If you recall what Thomas said and did you will sec that Christ called those blessed who thus believe in him. . . . Rightly, then, have those been justified who have believed in Christ without having seen him. The world, however, will lose this righteousness, because it has not sought to obtain the justice which conies through faith, preferring to remain in its own wickedness.

Now, we must understand that these reproaches are addressed, not to the Jews alone, but to every man who shall be stubborn and resist the Spirit; for by the term world is meant, not only the man who is for ever seeking pleasures and who docs not leave the devil's wickedness behind him, but also all those who are scattered throughout the world and dwell there. This double reproach is meant for all, because Christ has not merely called to salvation the Jews, that seed of Abraham, but the whole of fallen mankind from Adam. His grace is without measure, and the gift of faith is offered to the whole world.

The third reproach of the Holy Spirit shall be, as the Saviour tells us, the merited condemnation of the prince of this world. How this will come about I shall now explain. The Paraclete will testify to the glory of Christ by showing that he indeed is the Lord of the world, thus demonstrating to the world its error in abandoning one who is by nature God in order to worship one who is not God by nature, namely, Satan. . . .

Now, so far is he (Satan) from being able to preserve his honour that it is trodden under feet by those who arc spiritual, the faithful who confess that Christ is God. They trample on him while he tries to tempt them or molest them.... He is condemned in so far as he is no longer able to oppress by his power those who arc sealed with the Holy Spirit unto justice and sanctity of life, through their faith in Christ (PG. 74 *in loco}.*

2. Christ in heaven as our mediator:

In order to complete his work it was fitting that he should lift our nature up to the very heights, not content with redeeming us from sin and death, while bringing us into heaven itself, but changing us into the companions of the very angels in heaven. Just as the resurrection gave us power to escape from the corruption *of* death, now the gates of heaven were opened and we *could* attain to the very presence of the Father, we who had been expelled from that presence by sin . . . as our first *fruits, on his return to heaven he made us go up with him; just* as, by his nature our *life, he died and* rose for us,

so he who has eternally had sight of the Father and is seen by him, now presents himself there as man ... so that we might go with him as first fruits of humanity.

III. ST AUGUSTINE

Christ's mystical Body and its ascension

There arises in us a desire to know why it is that the Holy Ghost should be mainly concerned with convincing the world of this sin, i.e. that of disbelief in Christ, as though it were the only sin that man could commit. If, as is plain, there are many other sins, then why does the Holy Ghost rebuke mankind for this one alone? Is it that all other sins remain unforgiven because of unbelief and forgiven when we do believe; that God as it were holds this against us above all the rest, so that the others remain unforgiven as long as man, in his pride, refuses to bow down in belief? It is so written: God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble (James 4.6). For the grace of God is also a gift of God; but the greatest gift of all is the Holy Spirit himself, for which reason he is called a grace. Since all have sinned, all need the glory of God, because sin entered into this world through one man . . . and because of this grace, since it is freely given, so is he also; not as a reward after an examination of our merits, but as a gift after our sins have been pardoned.

The unbelieving, the lovers of this world, are made to believe in the reality of sin, since it is they who are meant by the world. When he said: He will prove the world wrong about sin, that offence is nothing else but their refusal to believe in Christ. . . . But there is a great difference between a man believing he is Christ and one who believes in Christ. That he is the Christ even the devils believed; but they do not believe in Christ, for he believes in Christ who hopes in Christ and loves Christ. Should he have faith but live without hope or love for Christ then he believes that Christ is, but he does not believe in Christ. He therefore who believes Christ by believing in Christ has Christ present with him and is in some way united to Christ and made a member of his body. This cannot be unless hope is added, together with love. . . .

It is because he came out of mercy that he goes out of justice to the Father; so that we may learn that justice cannot be perfected in us unless we fulfil the demands of mercy; seeking not our own things, but also those of others. . . . But if Christ alone goes to the Father what good is that to us? To what end is the world convinced of this justice by the Holy Ghost? Yet he does not go alone to the Father, because he has also said: No man has even gone up into heaven; but

* From the Comweniary *on the Gospel of St John,* treatise 94, *et sea* , and two sermons on the judgement of thc world by the Holy Ghost.

there is one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man, who dwells in heaven. . . . How then is he alone? Does it really mean Christ alone, when he is one with all his members as the head is one with the body? And what is his body if not the Church? As the same Doctor tells us: It is you who are the body of Christ; part of his members (1 Cor. 12. 27). And so, since we were fallen and he for our sake came down from heaven, what do these words mean: no man has ever gone up into heaven, if not that no man ascends to heaven who has not been made a member one with him; and as a member has become hidden within the body of him who descended from heaven?...

So we are not to regard ourselves as separated from that justice of which the Lord himself speaks when he says: About rightness of heart; I am going to the Father. For we also have risen together with Christ, through faith and hope, joined with him through those virtues; but our hope will only be fulfilled at the final resurrection of the dead. When our hope is fulfilled then our justification will also be completed. . . .

The world is then convicted and convinced of sin in all those who do not believe in Christ; and of justice in those who rise again among the members of Christ. Thus was it said: That we might be made the justice of God in him (2 Cor. 5. 21). For if justness be not in him then it is not in anyone. But if it be in him, he goes complete with us, as head is complete with members, to the Father; and thus perfect justness will be completed in us. For the same reason the world will be convinced of the reality of the judgement, because of the fact that the prince of this world is already judged; that is, the devil, prince of the unjust, those whose hearts are given over to this world they love; for which reason they are spoken of as the world. Just as our resting place shall be in heaven, if we be risen with Christ.

IV. ST BERNARD

(These extracts are taken from the third and fifth sermons of St Bernard for the Feast of the Ascension. Cf. St Bernard: Sermons for the Seasons and Principal Feasts of the year.)

i. *The intellect and will:*

The wisdom of God has returned to wisdom's home, whose inhabitants both understand and seek good; being most penetrating in mind and most ready in will to understand and to hearken to the voice of his commands (Ps. 102. 20). As for us, we still dwell in this lower region, where malice abounds and there is but little wisdom. 'For the corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down upon the sense that museth upon many things' (Wis. 9. 15).

2. Christ enlightens the mind:

Where shall we find truth in this darkness, where shall we look for charity in this wicked world which, according to the Evangelist, is wholly seated in malice? Can one be found, think you, who shall enlighten our intellect and inflame our will? Yes, undoubetdly, if onlv to be converted to Christ, so that the veil may be removed from our hearts. For he it is of whom the prophet says: The people that walk in darkness have seen a great light; to them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death light is risen (Isaias 9. 2).... Recall to mind the Incarnate Word and Wisdom of God, whose sole occupation during all the time when that unspeakable power, that Divine Glory and majesty, condescended to be seen upon earth and to converse with men, was to enlighten the eyes of men's hearts and to win them to the faith by his preaching and miracles.

3. *Our need ofpurification:*

For the Saviour inspired with the love of his own flesh the minds of the Apostles, who could not have been brought to any understanding of the things of faith without some previous change in their affections, nor were they able as yet to rise to a purely spiritual love. ... With regard to ourselves, my brethren, in order to be prepared to receive that grace according to our small measure, let us strive to ĕmpty our hearts and souls completely of all earth's miserable and transient delights and consolations. Particularly during these days which separate us from the feast of Pentecost we should be found with more than ordinary fervour and fidelity', persevering with one mind in prayer (Acts 1. 14). Thus shall we deserve to be visited, comforted and confirmed by the Spirit of love, sweetness and fortitude, λνΐιο will strengthen what is weak in us, make smooth what is rough and purify our hearts; who is one and the same substance with the Father and the Son, yet not one and the same Person.

. . . The bridegroom has been taken away from us, not without much sorrow of heart on our side. Nevertheless, he is only gone that he may send us the Spirit of truth. Let us therefore pray with all earnestness that the same divine Spirit may find, or rather, may render, us worthy of his visitation and may fill the whole house . .. so that his grace may teach us all things and we shall not need tribulation to make us understand ; and that, having thus enlightened our minds and purified our wills, he may vouchsafe to come into our hearts and make his abode with us. And as the rod of Aaron changed into a serpent and devoured the serpents of the magicians, so shall the Holy Spirit, when he comes, empty our hearts of all carnal affections and delights, infusing into them instead his own heavenly consolations, with the result that henceforth we shall discover rest in labour, joy in affliction and glory in shame.

SECTION IV. THEOLOGIANS

I. ST THOMAS AQUINAS

Sadness

I. *Definition:*

Just as two things are required for pleasure, namely conjunction with good and perception of this conjunction; so also two things are requisite for pain, namely conjunction with some evil (which is in so far evil as it deprives one of some good), and perception of this conjunction . . . (1-2. q. 35. a. 1. c) sorrow is a movement of the appetite in consequence of an apprehension; and even a privation, as apprehended, has the aspect of a being, wherefore it is called a being of reason.

2. *Its effects:*

(a) In itself it is neither good nor evil (1-2. q. 24. a. 4).

(b) Sometimes it is praiseworthy (3 q. 46. a. 6. *ad* 2).

(c) It may even produce joy (1-2. q. 35. a. 3. *ad lum).*

(d) It is the passion which can do us most bodily harm.

St Thomas says in this connection: Of all the soul's passions, sorrow is most harmful to the body. The reason for this is that sorrow is repugnant to man's life in respect to the species of its movement, and not merely in respect of its measure or quantity, as is the case with the other passions of the soul. For man's life consists in a certain movement which flows from the heart to the other parts of the body . . . those passions that imply a movement of the appetite in pursuit of something, are not repugnant to the vital movement as regards its species, but they may be repugnant thereto as regards its measure; such are love, joy, desire and the like; wherefore these passions conduce to the welfare of the body; though, if they be excessive, they may be harmful to it. On the other hand, those passions which denote in the appetite a movement of flight or contraction, are repugnant to the vital movement, not only as regards its measure, but also as regards its species; wherefore they are simply harmful; such are fear and despair and above all sorrow, which depresses the soul by reason of a present evil, which makes a stronger impression than future evil (1. 2. q. 37. a. 4).

(e) It hinders intellectual functions . . .

Now it is evident that sensible pain above all draws the soul's attention to itself; because it is natural for each thing to tend wholly to repel what is contrary to it, as may be observed even in natural things. It is likewise evident that in order to learn anything new we require study and effort with a strong intention, as is clearly stated

in Prov. 2. 4-5. Consequently, if the pain be acute man is prevented at the time from learning anything; indeed it can be so acute that, as long as it lasts, a man is unable to give his attention even to that which he knew already. However, a difference is to be observed according to the difference of love that a man has for learning or for considering: because the greater his love, the more will he retain the intention of mind so as to prevent it from turning entirely to the pain (1-2. q. 37. a. 1. c).

(f) Weighs on the soul . . .

It is evident from what has been said already that sorrow is caused by a present evil; and this evil, from the very fact that it is repugnant to the movement of the will, depresses the soul, inasmuch as it hinders it from enjoying that which it wishes to enjoy. And if the evil which is the cause of sorrow be not so strong as to deprive one of the hope of avoiding it, although the soul be depressed in as far as, for the present, it fails to grasp that which it craves for; yet it retains the movement whereby to repulse that evil. If, on the other hand, the strength of the evil be such as to exclude the hope of evasion, then even the interior movement of the afflicted soul is absolutely hindered, so that it cannot turn aside either this way or that. Sometimes the external movement of the body is paralysed, so that a man becomes completely stupified (1-2. q. 37. a. 2. c).

(g) It weakens our activity:

Sorrow at times does not depress or consume the soul, so as to shut out all movement, internal and external; but certain movements are sometimes caused by sorrow itself. Accordingly, action stands in a two-fold relation to sorrow. First as being the object of sorrow: and thus sorrow hinders any action: for we never do that which we do with sorrow as well as that which we do with pleasure, or without sorrow. . . . Secondly, action stands in relation to sorrow as its principle and cause; and such action must needs be improved by sorrow: thus the more one sorrows on account of a certain thing, the more one strives to shake off sorrow', providing there is a hope of shaking it off; otherwise no movement or action w'ould result from that sorrow'. (1-2. q. 37. a. 3. c).

3. *Remedies against sadness:*

(a) Any pleasure . . .

Pleasure is a kind of repose of the appetite in a suitable good; while sorrow arises from something unsuitable to the appetite. Consequently in movement of the appetite pleasure is to sorrow what, in bodies, repose is to weariness. . . . Therefore just as all repose of the body brings relief to any kind of weariness, ensuing from any unnatural cause; so every pleasure brings relief by assuaging any kind of sorrow due to any cause whatever (1-2. q. 38. a. 1. c).

(b) Friends . . .

When one is in pain it is natural that the sympathy of a friend should afford consolation; whereof the Philosopher affords a twofold reason: The first because since sorrow has a depressing effect, it is like a weight whereof we try to unburden ourselves; so that, when a man sees others saddened by his own sorrow, it seems as though others were bearing the burden with him, striving, as it were, to lessen its weight; wherefore the load of sorrow becomes lighter for him.... The second and better reason is because when a man's friends condole with him he sees that he is loved by them, and this affords him pleasure.

(c) The contemplation of truth:

The greatest of all pleasures consists in the contemplation of truth. Now, every pleasure assuages pain, as stated above; hence the contemplation of truth assuages pain or sorrow, and the more so the more perfectly one is a lover of wisdom. And therefore in the midst of tribulations men rejoice in the contemplation of divine things and of future happiness, according to James 1. 2 (1-2. q. 38. a. 4. c. Cf. *ad ÿum*).

Sloth

(Since this is a kind of sadness it is best dealt with here.)

(a) Definition and effects:

Sloth is sorrow for spiritual good . . . sorrow in the divine good about which charity rejoices belongs to a special vice which is called sloth (2-2. q. 35. a. 2). Sloth is sorrow about spiritual good inasmuch as it is divine good *(ibid.* a. 3). . . . Sloth is not an aversion of mind from any spiritual good, but from the divine good, to which the mind is bound to adhere. Wherefore if a man is sorry because someone forces him to do acts of virtue that he is not bound to do, this is not a sin of sloth; but when he is sorry to have to do something for God's sake . . . *(ibid.* a. 3. *ad zum).*

(b) It impedes good actions . . .

Sloth according to Damascene is an oppressive sorrow which so weighs upon man's mind that he wants to do nothing... hence sloth implies a certain weariness of work ... a sluggishness of mind which neglects to begin good *(ibid.* a. 1. c).

(c) It is a mortal sin and a capital sin:

Wherefore any sin which by its very nature is contrary to charity is a mortal sin by reason of its genus. And such is sloth, because the proper effect of charity is joy in God . . . while sloth is sorrow about spiritual good in as much as it is divine good ... the movement of sloth is sometimes in the sensuality alone, by reason of the opposition of the flesh to the spirit, and then it is a venial sin;

whereas sometimes it reaches to the reason, which consents in the dislike, horror and detestation of the Divine good, on account of the flesh utterly prevailing over the spirit. In this case it is evident that sloth is a mortal sin *{ibid.* a. 3).

A capital vice is one which easily gives rise to others as being their final cause. Now, just as we do many things on account of pleasure,

th in order to obtain it and through being moved to do something under the impulse of pleasure, so again we do many things on account of sorrow, either that we may avoid it or through being exasperated into doing something under pressure thereof. W hence, since sloth is a kind of sorrow, as stated above, it is fittingly reckoned a capital sin *{ibid.* a. 4).

(d) It gives rise to despair, faint-heartedness, sluggishness about the commandments, spite, malice and wandering after unlawful things *{ibid.* a. 4. *ad 2um).*

II. ST BONAVENTURE

The Gifts of the Holy Ghost

(These brief extracts from the *Breviloqium* give St Bonaventure's view of the need for the gifts and their functions.)

(a) They correct the harm done by the capital sins . . .

In the first place, in order to reject speedily those stumblings due to vices, there are seven gifts of the Holy Spirit; i.e. fear against pride; piety against envy; knowledge against anger; which is like a madness; fortitude against sloth, which makes the mind useless for good works; counsel against avarice; understanding against gluttony and wisdom against impurity.

(b) They give agility to our natural faculties . . .

In order to make our natural faculties quick to combat difficulties we need seven gifts of the Spirit. The irrascible appetite needs to be quickened both in adversity and in prosperity. In prosperity it is quickened by fear; in adversity by fortitude. The concupiscible appetite has to be quickened in all that relates to dealings with the neighbour which is the work of piety, in its dealings with God, which are regulated by wisdom. The rational part of man must be quickened with regard to speculation, choice and execution where the truth is concerned. The gift of counsel helps it to choose; that of knowledge to practise that choice, since this gift enables us to live as we should in the midst of an evil and perverse world.

(c) They facilitate the operation of the virtues . . .

The gifts of the Holy Ghost are also necessarily seven in order to perfect the operations of the virtues. Thus, fear assists temperance, piety helps towards true justice; knowledge completes prudence,

fortitude as a gift perfects fortitude as a virtue and also patience; counsel assists hope, knowledge faith, and wisdom charity.

(d) They help us to suffer with Christ . . .

Christ was moved to suffer through the Father's will, through human needs and solid virtue. The divine will moved him as it was known by the gift of understanding, loved through the gift of wisdom and reverenced through that of fear. Human need moved him, too, and in this there was need of the gift of knowledge to perceive it and above all of the gift of piety to have compassion on it. Solid virtue moved him too, virtue which could choose well through the gift of counsel and was also strong to suffer through that of fortitude.

(e) They have an effect on the whole of life:

'I 0 facilitate both action and contemplation we need seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. The contemplative life, directed as it is towards the consideration of the Trinity, must have three gifts: fear to give us due reverence for His Majesty7; understanding to know that truth; wisdom to appreciate its savour. There are four gifts which pertain to the active life, which is directed towards activity and suffering. Piety helps towards action, fortitude towards suffering, together with the two which direct us, namely, knowledge and counsel.

SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. J. E. NIEREMBERG

(A summary of the teaching in his *Aprecio y estima de la divina gracia,* concerning the gifts and fruits.)

i. *The difference between the virtues and the gifts:*

The virtues are given to act under the influence of human reason and free will; while the gifts are given us so that we may be quick to perceive the motions of the Holy Spirit and allow ourselves to be led by them, just as the sails of a boat allow it to be moved by the breeze.

In man there are two principles with the aid of which he can move and act virtuously; one is interior to man, his reason; the other is something outside man, God. Apart from this, anything moved by something else has to be in proportion to him who moves it, and the higher the moving principle the greater the need for this disposition in the one who is moved. Just as one needs natural virtues to be moved by reason, so other dispositions and perfections, much more excellent, are required that we may be moved by God.

According to Nieremberg, these perfections by means of which man is disposed to follow the impulses of God in those heroic acts

recapitulated in the Beatitudes, are the gifts of the Holy Ghost. He says: 'Just 35 the philosophers notice that there are two ways in which the natural virtues can operate, one morally, by means of the ordinary virtues, and one in an heroic fashion, moved by some instinct or superior principle; so in supernatural actions there cannot be missing one way of acting through the ordinary infused virtues, and another more excellent and divine, through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, more by a divine instinct than by anything human.'

2. *The description of each gift:*

They' are seven in number. Four which affect the intellect and three to move the will. The gift of wisdom sen es to prepare the soul for the knowledge of God and his divine attributes; that *of* knowledge is designed to help our realization of creatures and to use them properly' for and in God; the gift of understanding is meant to give us a deeper penetration into divine things; that of counsel helps us to use prudence properly' in our supernatural actions. Thus these four give us a most perfect prudence and perfect the intellectual side of man together with the virtues already there. The other three gifts perfect the will, i.e. the virtues of temperance, fortitude and justice. The gift of fortitude, by despising the terrors of this world, perfects the same virtue in the appetite; the fear of God does the same for temperance and its allied virtues; that of piety fortifies the virtues in the will, especially justice.

3. *Their relationship between themselves:*

The gift of fear begins by laying the foundation; once the soul is fearful of the devil then the gift of piety leads it to God, and once it seeks its salvation in him then the gift of knowledge teaches it, strengthening it later by fortitude, that it may do what it has learnt to be right. Knowledge *of good* without a good life is of little use. So that it may be moved by divine inspiration in this new life we are given the gift of counsel, perfected by that of understanding, that man may understand why he has to do the things he is commanded. Finally the Holy Ghost crowns all these gifts with that of wisdom, that he who is known through the gift of understanding may be appreciated and savoured through this gift. Thus, from the love of holiness and justice the soul follows that road which it knows it should follow.

The fruits of the Spirit

1. *Doctrine of St Patil:*

He who, from sin, is reborn to the life of grace, must also attain to that new life in his works. St Paul gives us this exhortation (Gal. 5. 16-25) and after describing the fruits *of* the flesh he goes on to give a list of those of the Spirit. It is a pity' that more Christians do not realize that this list is included in the catechism, that they might put them into practice for the fruits are the special effects of the virtues.

2. *The order of the fruits:*

In order that a man may be perfectly directed towards God he must first of all bring about order in himself, then in his relations with other men and lastly with regard to inferior creatures.

We can begin with the first—the order in one's own soul. Charity holds the first place here, and it is the first thing we receive, as a gift, from the Spirit (Rom. 5. 5). Love is followed by joy of possession, since love united the lovers (1 John 4. 16). This joy, in turn, is perfected by peace, once it flees from exterior things which could disturb it. Thus the soul is in order with regard to good things, now it must order itself with regard to those which are evil. This is done first of all by patience and longanimity.

With regard to other men, the first fruit of virtue is goodness, since we wish them all well. In execution this becomes benignity, by which we actually do good to others. We have to suffer at their hands at times, and this is where meekness will mitigate our natural anger; and in the order of execution faith or loyalty will prevent us from doing them harm through our anger.

In so far as exterior and inferior creatures are concerned, the soul is set right by modesty, continency and chastity.

II. BOSSUET

(The scheme of a sermon preached on the 5th Sunday after Easter in the cathedral of Meaux in 1692. The scheme will serve for any of the Sunday's which surround the Feast of the Ascension.)

I am going back to my Father (John 16. 17)

The phrase has, perhaps, a greater application in the case of God's adopted sons than in the case of Christ; because as God he never left the Father and as man he never lost the beatific vision. We are the ones who need to make continual efforts and to say always: I go to the Father. We shall consider what it means to go to the Father:

(a) What must happen to us before we reach Him?

(b) Growth in holiness:

Jesus already knew that the time had come for his passage from this world to the Father (John 13. 1). This is our starting point. We are not of this w'orld and we must abandon it.

1. *The world passes:*

You know what the world is—St Paul sums it all up when he says: Time is short (1 Cor. 7. 29). Therefore live as if you did not live in it. Do not allow any bonds, even the strongest, to hold you too

rightly. St Augustine points out that it is one thing to pass our time with the world and quite another to pass from this world to the Father. The former is the lot of sinners; the second is the inheritance of the sons of God, those who despise fine houses and palaces, crying to them: I am going, do not try to hold on to even the youth and strength which is still mine; I am in a hurry to go the Father.

2. *Going to the Father:*

While philosophers abandoned the world without knowing where to go, we must say, with the prodigal, I will arise and go to my hither.

We have reached our Fathers house—must we now stop? No; that would be to be satisfied with the fatted calf and the music. No; go higher yet, to the very cross itself, and hear our Lord say: I thirst.

I have passed through all that and God has granted me to persevere. Must I rest now? Rest? Are you better than St Paul? Then listen to what he says: Not that I have already won the prize, already reached fulfilment. I only press on, in hope of winning the master}', as Christ Jesus has won the mastery over me. No, brethren, I do not claim to have the mastery already, but this at least I do; forgetting what I have left behind, intent on what lies before me, I press on with the goal in view, eager for the prize, God's heavenly summons in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3. 12-14).

No, do not stop. Let your motto be: I am going to the Father, because the mountain which we are climbing is slippery and not to go forward is to slide back. Let us press on to the Pasch of the new covenant, in which the Lamb will enkindle us with love.

3. *Constant growth in love:*

And when we reach that state will it be the end? No, it is only the beginning. Do you not know that love always gives new strength to love more. It widens the possibilities of the heart, while the Holy Spirit gives new powers to increase our love. Therefore you still do not love as much as you can unless you use these new powers which perfect love has given you as a gift. Our life should be a continued growth in love, because he who sets a limit on his love does not know how to love. He who does not tend to a higher perfection has not even understood what perfection means nor the true nature of the Christian obligation. Be ye perfect, said our Saviour, as your heavenly Father is perfect. To attain this goal, which will never be reached in this life, we must always grow in perfection and love with an ever-increasing intensity.

Penance

I. *The sadness of penance:*

There is a sadness which is worldly . . . and then there is another type of sadness; that which I desire for all of you during this time—it is that of penance. . . . When God wounds us, when public or

private catastrophes surround us on all sides, when God chastises us in our goods, our person or our families then we should not be satisfied with complaining or weeping. These can cure nothing. We must go on until we reach those sins of ours which are the real cause of such misfortunes. Look at the prodigal son. When he is twisted with the pangs of hunger, remembering the abundance of food which the slaves have in his father's house, he does not remain in that state. He goes to the very source of the trouble; he suffers now because he once left his father. Arise and say with him: I will go to my father.

2. The nations rose up against the Jews and these said: It is Egypt, it is the Chaldeans, the sword of the King of Babylon which persecute us. No, it is the sins which have separated you from your God (isaias 59. 2). He then goes on to exhort all his hearers to make sure that their penance is one which will last, not one that will disappear at the first sight of a temptation.

SECTION VI. PAPAL TEXTS

1. *Man, the crowning work of God's creation:*

The very first page of Holy Scripture records, with that nobility of phrase which is native to it, that God crowned the work of creation which he had begun by making man in his own image. The Bible further teaches that man was enriched with supernatural gifts and properties, destined for a mysterious and eternal happiness ... it describes to us, with vivid and significant wealth of detail, how mankind was divided into various nations or tribes, scattered throughout the different parts of the world. And how, even when his creatures were guilty of a wretched apostasy from their Creator, he would not abandon his fatherly care of them, but determined, in the decrees of his divine mercy, to unite them again to himself at a later time, by a covenant of friendship (Pius XII, *Summi Pontificatus^* 1939).

2. *The interior life:*

For this reason, long before secular association destined to promote the reign of Christ had acquired the development which they have acquired nowadays, these men had constructed a solid body of doctrine destined to feed the interior life and sustain the work of these apostles. What is more, as if they could foresee those dangers of the active life which we have indicated when speaking about the heresy of activity, even while they encouraged and praised this desire to promote the kingdom of Christ, nevertheless, they desired above all that absolute precedence should be given to the interior life, so convinced were they that, in the conquest of souls for God, this is of greater importance than any human standards (Pius XII, To the Society of Jesus, 19 Sept. 1948).

3. *The conquest of materialism:*

Materialism, however paradoxical it may seem, can be reduced as a doctrinal system, to the activities and manifestations of the spirit. W ell, a spiritual force cannot be overcome except by another more powerful, and that which you possess to vanquish materialism is your Catholic faith, with all its richness, its energy of conviction together with its plentitude of divine life. Such a force is powerful enough to defeat materialism, and the only man who possesses it is the man who lives an interior life, a man who thinks as a Christian, who prays, who is filled with God (Radio message to the Swiss Popular Catholic Union, 4 Sept. 1949).

4. *Renew this interior life from time to time:*

Since you have to live in the world and amidst the dust of the world, it is necessary to clean yourself of it now and again. Nothing is more essential to further the very ends of your religious and social apostolate than this renovation in your hearts, a readjustment to the divine love of your whole fives, so that all your actions may be more sincere, have greater rectitude, be more meritorious, more effective among men, and of true service to the interests of God and his Church (Message on the inauguration of the *Domus Pads,* 29 June 1951).

5. *The most eloquent sermon is a Christian life:*

This faith, beloved sons, which by the grace of God you possess, is the same for which Peter was crucified in Rome and Paul be-headed; that faith for which mothers and girls, youth, children and old people suffered tortures and death in the arena of imperial Rome. This faith, which is the eternal and unchangeable truth of God. Love that faith, live it, spread it. But this you will not be able to do unless you first of all know and understand its immaculate beauty. Be mindful of the fact that no sermon is as eloquent as a perfect Christian life (To the pilgrims from the U.S.A., 2 Sept. 1948).

On the Gospel of today Pius XII has the following ideas which are briefly summarized :

(a) The true Christian should be always joyful at the bottom of his heart. This is not egoism, but true confidence in God. In the midst of the vicissitudes of life true joy consists in finding God, taking refuge in him and in union with Christ. This cannot be extinguished by any weariness; while the weak are submerged in their affliction. The unbeliever will never credit it, but those who have faith will never cease to sing an eternal alleluia. This Christian joy is the main element in the conquest of the world's attention. However, denial of oneself is necessary in order to attain this joy. The supernatural motive which inspires it is the promise of Christ that he will prepare a place for us in his glory. Also we have been promised his Spirit (John 14. 2; Acts 1. 8). That is the real reason

for the Church's prayer on the fourth Sunday after Easter. This holy joy motivated by the Easter promises is the only thing which can wipe away the tears of this life. The glory of our Head has gone before us and there is the hope for the whole Mystical Body.

(The principal documents in which these ideas are found are:

Discourse of Pius XII to the Retreat Organization, 28 June, 1952. Vigil of Christmas, 1939. Discourse to the youths of Catholic Action in Italy, 20 April 1946. *Ibid.* 14 July 1939. Discourse for the Vigil of the Ascension, 1939. Homily for the Feast of the Resurrection, 24 March 1940. Discourse on the feast of the Ascension, 2 May 1940.)

SECTION VII. LITERARY NOTES

The world through the eyes of St Teresa

1. Everything of this kind, and things of most sublime beauty seem to be so deeply impressed on my soul in prayer that I wonder when I see so many and evident truths. They make worldly things seem to me folly; and so I have to be very careful when I remember what I used to be like with regard to worldly things, for it seems to me to be folly to be grieved by deaths, or by the trials of this life—or at least to allow one's grief or love for relatives and friends to persist for a very long time *{Spiritual Relations,* 1. 17).

2. Until recently I used to think that I had need of others and I had more confidence in worldly aids, but now I see clearly that they are none of them any more use than dry rosemary branches and that we shall not be safe if we lean on them, for at the least breath of opposition or slander they break *(ibid. Rel.* 3. 1).

3. This is a very distressing thing, but it produces the most wonderful effects and the soul at once loses its fear of any trials which may befall it; for by comparison with the feelings of deep distress which it has experienced, these seem as nothing. Having gained so much the soul would be willing to suffer them all over again many times; but it has no means of doing so.... The soul has far more contempt for the things of the world than it had before, because it sees that no worldly thing was of any use to it in its torments; at the same time it is far more detached from creatures, because it sees that it can be comforted and satisfied only by the Creator, while it has the greatest fear and anxiety not to offend him, because it sees that he can punish as well as comfort *(Interior Castle,* 6. 11. 10).

4. May God deliver you in many ways from the world's peace; may he never let us experience it, because it leads to perpetual warfare. When a worldly person goes about quietly, deep in great sins and

with no remorse of conscience, so calm is he in his vices, you have already read that this peace is but a sign that the devil and he are friends. While such persons are alive he does not want to fight against them, because they might turn to God in their efforts to escape from this fight. But those who follow this path never last in their senice of him; then, as the devil knows all too well, they will turn once more to their pleasures and to their friendship with him, until he has them where he can demonstrate to them the false nature of his peace *(Med. on the Canticle,* c. 2. 1).

SECTION VIII. SERMON SCHEMES

I. LITURGICAL

Preparation for Pentecost

Towards Pentecost

1. Just as, in Advent, the Church uses the word which signifies a coming, so now she sings: When the Spirit of Truth shall come.

(a) By this she implies that we should prepare ourselves for his coming.

(b) The better our preparation the more fruitful will that coming be; God, in his providence, depends on our co-operation.

2. To move us to make this preparation we shall confine ourselves, in this scheme, to the need we have of the Spirit in the Christian daily life, taking as a basis the liturgy of this Sunday.

The Christian life

i. *Religion is not pure sentiment:*

St James defines what we mean by the Christian life; something which must penetrate and permeate the whole of life: above all, in good works (James 2.17).

2. In today's epistle the Church reads a piece of St James in which some of those good works are mentioned: Rid yourselves, then, of all defilement, of all the ill will that remains in you; be patient and cherish that word implanted in you which can bring salvation to your souls.

The will of God

We can sum up the duties of a Christian by saying that they imply a total identification of our wills with that of God. That is why the Church prays today: Grant to thy faithful people to love what thou commandest and to desire what thou hast promised.

This is not merely a petition for a Christian life; it is the scheme

of Christian perfection, which means that we always remain completely tranquil in the midst *of* the ebb and flow of this world, always fixed on God and in union with him. May our hearts always remain fixed on those true joys . . . (Collect).

The Holy Ghost in the Christian life

i. To make this life possible the Holy Spirit is given to us: The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom we have received (Rom. 5. 5).

(a) This divine guest is given to us in abundance—poured out.

(b) At once silent and eloquent, his wisdom knows everything, hears everything (even the slightest whisper of our hearts) and penetrates everything.

2. *f/eperseveres in action:*

(a) His inspirations sanctify every branch of the Christian's life.

(b) Each new impression, every inspiration repeated, may be said to constitute a fresh coming. For this reason Origen used to say that, for the Christian, every day is a new Pentecost.

Fidelity to the Spirit

1. This is the secret of sanctity: the faithful soul does good works which lead to salvation and identifies himself with the will of God.

2. When the Church exhorts us today to love the law of God and to desire his promises implicitly she is telling us that we must be faithful to the Spirit and his impulses within us.

(a) This is the most secure way to attain sanctity. St Teresa laments the fact that souls separate themselves from God because they are not faithful to the Spirit.

(b) Even when we do not see the reason for what is commanded or suggested to us by God, still we should be faithful: God works as one does who makes a tapestry—from the back of it—and often we cannot see the complete design. All we see is a confused mass of threads; but once the work is complete and the tapestry turned round, we can see its beauty and the reason for each thread.

(c) At no time should we resist his activity in us: Do not stifle the utterances of the Spirit (1 Thess. 5. 19). Do not distress God's holy Spirit, whose seal you bear until the day of your redemption comes (Eph. 4. 30). .....

(d) We must do all we can not to impede his activity m us, either through neglect, carelessness, dissipation, seeking our own way and good pleasure:

i. Much less by conscious and deliberate resistance,

ii. A soul which is abandoned to its own guidance through such voluntary resistance will soon fall a prey to the prince of darkness.

Devotion to the Spirit

I. True devotion to the Holy Ghost consists in all that we have already said—that fidelity to his will.

(a) Devotion to the Holy Spirit means opening our souls to make them his dwelling place:

i. to give him our being that he may possess it by his gifts;

ii. to give him our life that he may make it divine;

iii. to put in his hands the unformed stone of our misery, that he may transform it into the image of Christ.

(b) Devotion to the Spirit means possessing him and allowing oneself to be loved by him:

i. it means allowing the divine artist to move us according to his good pleasure;

ii. allowing him to destroy in us all that is opposed to his holy designs; all evil, all that is worldly;

iii. allowing him to infuse into us a new life, that sharing in the life of God.

2. That is what is demanded of us today; a life which is pure, clean, faithful and generous.

II. THE EPISTLE:

A: Grace in St James

1. *He lays down the main principles:*

(a) Whatever gifts are worth having, whatever endowments are perfect of their kind, these come to us from above; they are sent down by the Father of all that gives light, with whom there can be no change, no swerving from his course.

i. All that we have, natural or supernatural, comes from God. What powers hast thou, that did not come to thee by gift? And if that come to thee by gift, why dost thou boast of them as if there were no gift in question?

ii. In the Exercises, St Ignatius calls this the principle and foundation of the spiritual life.

(b) St James distinguishes between other creatures and those who are called to be God's sons.

i. When he speaks of man he does not say that he receives gifts from God but from the Father—thus indicating our special position as sons and our status as first-fruits of his creation.

ii. To sum up the whole idea he points out that: It was his will to give us birth, through his true word, meaning us to be the first-fruits, as it were, of all his creatures (James i. 18).

2. We can now give the true meaning to the phrase: Whatever gifts are worth having . . . these come to us from above (James i. 17).

(a) He is speaking of all the helps necessary for life in the supernatural order of things;

i. because he is talking about death to sin and re-birth to a new life (1. 15); a re-birth through grace;

ii. because these gifts come to us from our Father in order that he may give birth to us as sons, lifting us above all other creatures.

(b) All that is perfect and which directs us towards God and heaven merits the name of Gift in the strict sense. This implies gratitude on our part—we have no right to these things.

B: Boasting

Introduction

1. It is for us men to be ready listeners, slow to speak our minds, slow to take offence (James 1. 19). Surely a description of a type of man very different from that which we see only too often, the one who has to be the centre of all conversation, never ceasing to talk about himself and his experiences.

2. We shall follow St Thomas's explanation of this sin and thus avoid the need for anything further on the matter (2-2. q. 112. a. 1 and 2).

Definition

1. Boasting essentially means the exaltation of oneself in words—talking about oneself above oneself.

2. *This can happen in two ways:*

(a) Sometimes a man speaks of himself, not above what he is in himself, but above that which he is esteemed by men to be; and this the Apostle declines to do when he says: I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth in me, or anything he heareth of me (2 Cor. 12. 6).

(b) In another way a person uplifts himself above what he is by speaking about himself above what he is in reality. And since we should judge of things as they are in themselves, rather than as others deem them to be, it follows that boasting denotes more properly the uplifting of oneself above what one is in oneself, than the uplifting of self above what others think of me (2-2. q. 112. 1. a).

Its malice

1. It is opposed to truth.

2. It usually comes from pride, vanity, desire for wealth or worldly honours *(ibid.* a. 1. *ad 2.11m et ad yum),* and can give rise to such things as quarrels, anger, etc. *(art.* 2. *ad turn).*

The gravity of this sin

1. Sin is mortal if it be directly opposed to charity, which it destroys in the soul; consequently, considered in itself in as much as it is opposed to truth this sin can be either mortal or venial.

(a) Mortal, when it belittles God or injures our neighbour in a grave fashion (Luke 18. **n** is a good example).

(b) On other occasions, when nothing is uttered against God or one's neighbour it does not exceed a venial sin.

2. Considered from the point of view of the cause from which it arises, namely, pride, vanity, desire for vainglory, etc. then one needs to distinguish:

(a) If the cause is so grave as to be mortal then the boasting is also mortal; otherwise it will be venial.

(b) However, at times the cause is desire for wealth or honour which moves us to boast; in which case it may come near to deceit and contain a danger to our neighbour's rights; and then it may easily be mortal. Not in even' case, of course, because there may be a desire for gain which does not contain any harm done to the neighbour.

Boasting and perfection

1. For St Augustine there is no sin so pernicious as this, of attributing to oneself that which we owe to God. When boasting attains this level it can easily be mortal.

2. However, leaving on one side the cold classification of this vice in terms of sin, let us look at it in terms of perfection:

(a) The doctrine of St Augustine teaches us that truth and perfection both demand that all should be attributed to God.

(b) Of ourselves and by ourselves we are nothing and have nothing except our sins (cf. James i. 17-18).

(c) Perfection consists in realizing this vacuum in ourselves and asking God earnestly to fill it.

(d) Is there anything so opposed to this attitude as this vain boasting of which we have been speaking?

i. We should think of the example of the saints, who only defended themselves, as did St Paul, when the common good demanded it;

ii. also that of Christ himself.

C: Meekness and justice

The problem

1. Today's epistle speak to us of meekness.

2. At first sight it seems to contradict somewhat the gospel:

(a) The Holy Ghost is the spirit of love; yet he is charged with the duty of accusing the world of its sins.

(b) Christ calls himself meek on certain occasions (Matt. 11. 29) while on others he is a severe judge.

(c) The Father is the God of mercies (2 Cor. 1. 3), and the God of punishments as well.

3. How can these two attributes be reconciled?

(a) In the nature of God they are identified; at times we say, in order to give a popular explanation to the people, that God is merciful during life and a severe judge after death: but there is really no need to make this distinction, since he is always meek and just at one and the same time.

(b) A more exact description of what the words meek and merciful mean shows that they are perfectly compatible with justice.

4. Virtue is a mean between two extremes, at least when both are evil.

(a) For man it is difficult for him to keep the balance, even when he practises a virtue:

i. if he loves justice it is possible for him to exaggerate its severity;

ii. if he is merciful it may be that he offends against justice in so doing.

(b) The simple observation of this fact:

i. causes us to divide all men (especially rulers) into two classes, the meek and the severe;

ii. it also incites us to regard these two virtues as incompatible, when in reality a study of them and of the lives of the great saints who were also rulers, like St Louis and St Ferdinand and St Edward—leaving God on one side for the moment—proves that they were at one and the same time, merciful and severe.

The solution

1. It is to be found in the mutual relationship between clemency and meekness on the one hand, and anger and severity on the other.

(a) Justice imposes and demands due penalty for crime;

(b) clemency and meekness are not opposed to justice but to anger.

2. Anger is a passion which excites us to apply chastisements which are more grave (2-2. q. 157. a. 1. c).

(a) It is a natural effect of our self-love, since it is more natural for a man to desire to take revenge for injuries received than to fall short *(ibid.* a. 2. *ad*

(b) It is also the effect of hatred for our neighbour, which makes us rejoice in the evils which fall upon our enemies and therefore to exaggerate his punishment.

(c) Cruelty means excess in punishment, wherefore Seneca says that they are cruel who, even though they punish for a just reason, do not know how to observe the true mean.

(d) It may even attain a kind of madness in which a man loses that human affection by means of which man should naturally be the friend of man.

3. Meekness and mercy face up to this disorder which we call anger:

(a) the first moderates it interiorly, while the second moderates its exterior effects by moderating the punishment;

(b) both co-operate to produce the same effect and both are the daughters of charity: It results from one man's loving another that he takes no pleasure in the latter's punishment in itself, but only as directed to something else, for instance, justice, or the correction of the person punished *(ibid.* a. *1. ad 2uni).*

4. *Severity:*

A virtue through which a man is inflexible in the application of just penalties.

5. *The relation between severityy meekness and mercy:*

(a) We have found the point in which all agree—the fact that they are virtues means that they are governed by reason:

i. Clemency, in mitigating punishment, is governed by reason, as Seneca says; and meekness likewise moderates anger according to right reason.

ii. At first sight it may appear that the incompatible one is mercy', but even this is not so, because 'they are both according to right reason'. For severity is inflexible in the inflicting of punishment, when right reason requires it; while clemency mitigates punishment, also according to right reason, when and where this is requisite *(ibid.* a. 2. *ad luni).*

Mercy and justice in God and man

i. From what has been said we can see how it is that God can be just, meek and merciful.

(a) God does not possess these virtues which modify the passions in the same way as we do. W hat we mean when we say that God is meek and just is simply this: in him justice is never disturbed by anger.

(b) He always applies the just measure to things. It was just that the good thief should be saved as it was just that Judas should not. He has in his hands all the elements to judge, since his intellect and will are always just.

(c) Now; within the framework of this just norm and because of our weakness and debility, also because of his loving-kindness, God decided to show us the effects of his virtues with more or less intensity at different times.

i. While we live he manifests his justice by making clear the effects of his patience, meekness and mercy.

ii. When the judgement comes he manifests it by his severity.

2. *Men:*

(a) We are not so perfect; except in those cases in which the ruler realizes the weakness of his character (for it is characteristic of the weak man to swing between too much cruelty and too much leniency), then man should incline towards mercy.

(b) St Thomas gives the reasons:

i. Love inclines to mercy—and we should love all men.

ii. Self love and anger incline us to cruelty. We are all too prone to these vices.

iii. Punishment also has as its end the correction of the guilty.

(c) But St Thomas also gives us another principle which is the key to the situation:

i. It is more natural to man to desire vengeance for injuries done to him than to be lacking in that desire.

ii. Clemency mitigates punishment, not in respect of that which is according to right reason, but as regards that which is according to common law, which is the object of legal justice. In other words, each individual case has to be considered on its merits.

iii. Therefore, it is clear that clemency is related to severity as equity to legal justice; it mitigates the punishment not according to the letter of the law but according to the spirit (z'Æzl·/. a. 2. *ad 2um*).

(d) The doctrine is clear:

i. There is a rational norm which cannot be broken.

ii. There is a legal norm which must be applied according to the circumstances.

iii. What are these circumstances? human weakness, lack of malice in the intention, ignorance.

iv. It need hardly be mentioned that in case of doubt. . . .

3. What has been said can now be applied to rulers and judges:

(a) The individual Christian is not a judge; he has not been so named by his brothers, nor can he read the interior of their hearts and know if they have sinned or not.

(b) His law is that of love:

i. Only from love should one undertake fraternal correction.

ii. Onlv the common good should lead one to denounce another before the courts or superiors—and it must be certain that the common good does demand it.

(c) No one is forbidden to protect his rights, but if he is seeking perfection then let him remember: Blessed are the meek ... the merciful.

m. THE GOSPEL

A: It is better for you I should go away

Mysterious words

1. *There are many such in this discourse:*

So full are your hearts at my telling you this . . . and yet I can say truly that it is better for you I should go away (John 16. 6-7).

2. The apostles could not see the good in this, no matter how it was understood.

(a) If they refer to the passion and death which were so near, then they lacked the supernatural vision to comprehend that. They were not yet soaked in the doctrine of the Cross, nor in the idea of being redeemed through suffering.

(b) If the words were to be understood of the glorious ascension of Christ into heaven (the more probable opinion) they understood even less the benefits which would come from the loss of the bodily presence of him on whom they had come to depend so much.

3. This is not merely true of the apostles. We also fail to see the real reason for this doctrine of Jesus.

(a) Christ causes our salvation through his merits—and the ascension is not a merit, but a reward given to Christ himself.

(b) Nevertheless, the words of Christ are clear—it is better that he should go to his Father.

4. St Thomas has this to say about the benefits which come to us through the ascension of Christ into heaven.

This ascension is convenient from our own point of view

1. The ascension of Christ is the causes of man's salvation in two ways, one from the point of view of man himself and the other from that of Christ.

2. *From man's point of view because:*

(a) it increases our faith in the whole of the supernatural order, which Christ came to preach;

(b) it increases the hope that, through the merits of Christ, we too will be able to attain to that eternal happiness which he now enjoys;

(c) it increases our reverence for Christ—we knew him as man in human flesh, now we see him as God and in triumph (2 Cor. 5. 16);

(d) in particular charity increases through the ascension because:

i. thc ascension lifts our hearts to heaven *(cf.* Col. 3. 1-2);

ii. our heart will then be where our treasure is (Matt. 6. 21) and where we shall be able to collect our true and eternal reward;

iii. because the Holy Spirit is the love which will lift our hearts

to heaven, Therefore Christ says that it is convenient for us that he should go in order that he may send the Spirit to us (cf. St Augustine on this point).

It is convenient from the point of view of Christ

1. With it he has prepared for us the way to heaven.
(a) He says that he goes to prepare a place for us (John 14. 2).
(b) In heaven he is our head, claiming the presence there of his members (cf. John 14. 13).
(c) And as a pledge that we also shall one day ascend to heaven, for which reason he took with him all the blessed who had been awaiting his triumph in Limbo.

2. As a High Priest he has entered into heaven to make further intercession for us (Heb. 7. 25).
(a) because the very presence of his human nature before the Father is a constant prayer for us;
(b) the God who thus contemplates the whole of human nature redeemed by that of his Son, will also have pity on those for whose sake the Son took a human nature.

3. Finally, constituted God and Lord in heaven, Christ will send us from thence his most precious gifts.
(a) St Paul says:
He has mounted up on high; he has captured his spoil; he has brought gifts to men (Eph. 4. 8 if.).
(b) Therefore Christ, on going up to heaven, is not the meritorious cause of our salvation, but he is the efficacious and practical cause of it, and once there he does distribute those gifts which have been won by his merits.

B: Jesus and the Holy Spirit

A double relationship

1. Why does Jesus say: It is better for you I should go away; he who is to befriend you will not come to you unless I do go . . . (John 16. 7ff.)?

2. We may give a summary of the answer thus:
(a) because the Holy Spirit would not be sent until after Christ was glorified;
(b) because he will apply to our souls the redemption of Christ, sanctifying them and transforming them into Christ.

The Spirit sent by Jesus

I. It is true that the apostles were justified during the life of Christ:
(a) they received, then, the Holy Spirit;

(b) they also received him again on the day of Christ's resurrection for the particular grace of being able to forgive sins (John 20. 22).

2. But here we are considering the visible action of the Spirit on the Church, a symbol of the invisible effect he has on each soul. We are talking of the full and complete sending of the Spirit in the mission of distributing grace. This was done by Jesus after his glorification.

(a) He prayed for this:

I will ask the Father, and he will give you another to befriend you, one who is to dwell continually with you for ever. It is the truth-giving Spirit, for whom ... (John 14. 16).

(b) He merited it for us—as he did all other graces:

(c) He sent the Spirit to us, after his ascension:

i. If the pouring out of the Spirit is a work of Christ's redemptive mission, we must not forget that this mission was not complete until the day of Christ's definite glorification. Once he had ascended into heaven he is seated at the right hand of the Father.

ii. What is more, Christ himself had promised it to his Apostles, and to all those who believed in him (John 7. 38-39). While he lived with them their faith was as yet imperfect; after his ascension it was perfected and they could receive other rivers of that living water.

The sanctifying work of the Spirit

1. From the whole discourse of the Supper we may conclude that the work of sanctification would be brought to completion by the Spirit.

2. This Spirit is to be infused, not only at Pentecost, but as many times as a soul is justified.

(a) This sanctification—according to Christ's sacerdotal prayer—is to be through truth: keep them holy, then, through the truth; it is thy word that is truth (John 17. 17).

(b) This truth is nothing less than the word of the Father:

i. the substantial Word—Christ;

ii. the Word which covered itself in human flesh and was incarnate in it.

(c) Keep them holy—St Thomas comments:

i. i.e. make them perfect, saints even. And that in truth, i.e. in Me, as your Son, who am the truth;

ii. as he will say: make them share in my sanctity and truth;

(d) The Spirit has to teach us to give testimony to this truth: It will be for him, the truth-giving spirit, when he comes, to guide you into all truth . . . (John 16. 13).

(c) At Pentecost he sanctifies the apostles and the Church so that, throughout the ages, they may give birth to saints through the action of this same Spirit, who will make souls like to Christ.

The Spirit transforms us into Christ

i. Christ is the one way to sanctity—the various ways described by the saints are only accidental; there is one which is essential, to reproduce the characteristics of the life of Christ in our own.

(a) Through him we are given the adoption of sons, and this, St Thomas says; means that he gives us a resemblance to the natural Son of God, incarnate wisdom (2-2. q. 45. a. 6. *ad lum*).

(b) It is only through the Holy Spirit that anyone can say, Jesus is the Lord (1 Cor. 12. 3).

(c) It is the Spirit who is the divine artist, who with gentle yet strong blows models on us the image of him who is the way, the truth and the life.

C: The Paraclete

The sadness of the apostles

1. Accustomed as they were to the presence of Christ, they rejoiced in it.

(a) On the contrary, they were sad when he announced his departure to them.

(b) To console them Christ promises that he will send them the Spirit.

2. The presence of Christ was a consolation; yet he tells them that it is expedient for them that he should leave them, because then he will send them another Paraclete—the Holy Spirit is the one who holds the true office of consoler.

3. He wishes to show us that the Holy Spirit is the true consoler to whom we should go in our dark hours of sadness.

Sadness and consolation

1. It may be human to suffer sadness, but it is a vice to allow oneself to be overcome by it.

2. *Its effects:*

(a) it causes depression despair, worry;

(b) causes a loss of energy in the soul—the energy we have is taken up in the fight against our sadness instead of in other things;

(c) it impedes intellectual operation, weighs down the soul, weakens activity and can even have a harmful effect on the body.

3. For this reason it has to be fought and we must find some consolation to attack it with.

False consolations

1. Being an evil, any good thing will counteract it; any joy, as St Thomas says, will provide us with a remedy for sadness.

2. The world seeks this consolation in material and sensible good.

(a) This is a mistake, because such consolation, like the things which produce it, is passing.

(b) It may even change into a new source of sadness when we lack it once more.

3. Experience teaches us that when a person is suffering neither riches, luxury, money, pleasures nor anything like that can alleviate the pain.

Truth and love

For St Thomas the real remedy for such sadness is two-fold, friends and truth.

I. *A friend:*

(a) By this we understand the true friend, who really loves us.

(b) To know that one is loved is to feel onself surrounded by a sincere affection and this is an effective relief from suffering.

2. *The contemplation of truth:*

This is the highest operation of the rational creature and therefore, for St Thomas, the authentic source of consolation, because of the joy it brings with it.

The best of all consolers

1. The full and perfect consolation is to be found only in the happiness of the next life; where God will wipe away all tears from their eyes (Apoc. 7. 17).

2. In this life the best and most effective consolation is, undoubtedly, divine—the Holy Spirit is the best consoler. This office is attributed to him because he is the spirit of truth and love.

(a) Because he is love:

i. He teaches us to despise the things of this world and to unite ourselves with him. Thus he turns aside from us sadness and pain, giving us something of the heavenly joys: the fruits of the Spirit are charity', joy . . . (Gal. 5. 22).

ii. He is the true friend who lives in the soul in grace—the soul's delightful guest.

(b) Because he is the spirit of truth:

i. The contemplation of the supernatural revealed truths of the faith is a sure source of consolation, made possible through Christ and through God's mercy towards us.

ii. This is the truth which the Holy Spirit teaches us.

iii. Even sadness, sorrow of all kinds, have their element of truth, and that truth is that all of them come to us from the hands of our Father who loves us; that they make us more like our model, Christ crucified; that they are a most powerful instrument to detach us from the things of this world and to turn us to God; that they are manifestations of infinite justice—and mercy.

iv. If we perceive this truth, then in the midst of sorrow we shall find consolation, not in the sorrow as a pain, but in so far as it is related to eternal truths. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, principally through the gifts of knowledge and wisdom. It would appear to be the consolation Christ received in the Garden. The angel let him see the truth about his Passion. It is also the consolation of the saints and of good souls.

The consolations of the Spirit

Of the early Church it was said : that it was 'filled with encouragement by the Holy Spirit' (Acts 9. 31). The same can be said of souls.

(a) The more they live in a spirit of recollection and prayer, so much the greater will their consolations be in times of tribulation.

(b) When those times come then a look at the interior life will be sufficient to make them feel very near to them the consolations of their best Friend, as they see the great good which such sorrow's bring with them.

D : The Holy Spirit, source of consolation

The promise of a consoler

1. Christ attends to all at this moment of his leave-taking. He is worried by the cloud of sadness which he sees gathering darker at every moment over the little chosen band of his apostles. Like a ray of light to pierce this darkness comes the promise of a consoler, and that it is necessary for him to go that the Spirit may come to comfort them.

2. He by no means wishes that they should remain orphans. All these signs of tenderness are to be taken into consideration if we wish to understand this last discourse. As comforter in all sadness the Spirit will come.

The consoling Spirit in the Liturgy

1. The liturgy of Pentecost has been wwked out with exquisite care by the Church, whose soul is the Holy Spirit.

2. In that liturgy the most beautiful and significant titles are given to the Holy Ghost.

3. Associating herself with the words of Christ the Church lays accent on the consoling influence of the Spirit,

(a) in the collect, where the Church asks that she may always enjoy his holy consolations . . .

(b) in the sequence, where she calls the Holy Spirit the best of all consolers,

(c) in the preface, where she says that the Church all over the world rejoices today because the Spirit has been sent to us by Christ from heaven, as he promised.

The Holy Spirit, source of consolation

He is the love of God personified, bringing grace into our hearts at every moment—and grace is a share in the infinite Good which is God. Through grace the Trinity dwells in our soul, and that alone is worth more to us in terms of consolation than anything else. It is the seed of glory' within us.

The effects of the Spirit

We can see some of these in the apostles, and the same thing happens in souls.

1. *Consolation for the absence of Christ:*

(a) The apostles were like drunken men after the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, so full of joy were they.

(b) The same consolation is given to souls; because the Spirit makes them understand the sweetness of Christ, and thus consoles them in those times of darkness and despoliation.

2. *Consolation in the form of grace:*

(a) Through it we are incorporated into Christ.

(b) Through grace he allows us to overcome—with all the force proper to our head—all temptations; at the same time we are given the power to overcome everything, from within or without, which might prevent our advance in the spiritual life.

(c) This triumph of grace is the true consolation.

3. *In persecution:*

(a) The apostles retire from the presence of the judges rejoicing that they had been found worthy to suffer something for Christ (Acts 5. 41).

(b) St Andrew, on seeing that cross from which he had fled on Good Friday' hails it with the most sublime sentiments. It was the song put on his lips by the Holy Spirit.

(c) St Ignatius of Antioch did not wish that anyone should try to deprive him of the grace of martyrdom.

4. *The consolation of the apostolate:*

(a) The Holy Spirit, as the soul of the Church, has the mission of spreading the Mystical Body of Christ until it reaches all souls.

(b) He gives to its members the consolation of being bearers of the word of truth to their brothers.

(c) This spreading must be done through the cross and through suffl'ering, but the Holy Spirit makes it plain to the members of Christ's Body that there is an inexplicable joy to be found in spiritual fecundity.

(d) Thus St Paul says that he was overflowing with joy in the midst of his tribulations (2 Cor. 7. 4).

5. *The consolation of hope:*

(a) In him too you learned to believe, and had the seal set on your faith by the promised gift of the Holy Spirit; a pledge of the inheritance which is ours . .. (Eph. 1. 13-14).

(b) When he places in us the life of grace and gives us life as the soul of the Mystical Body we know that later we shall attain that glory which is the lot of those who belong to the mystical body.

6. *Finally, the consolation of prayer:*

(a) Through it and by means of it the Holy Spirit will mitigate all suffering.

(b) Through prayer there can be an element of consolation in the most difficult circumstances of life.

7. *Conclusion:*

Do not distress God's Holy Spirit, whose seal you bear until the day of your redemption comes (Eph. 4. 30).

E: The Holy Spirit and bad Christians

The Spirit as judge

He will judge not merely the Jewish nation for their rejection of Christ, but also all those who live bad lives—indeed all the world.

He will convince the world of sin

i. The bad Christian will receive a harder judgement than the pagans or the Jews:

(a) he has received the light,

(b) but has not corresponded with all the benefits he has received through Christ. These benefits are:

i. *The incarnation:* Christ comes down to the level of our humanity so that we might be lifted up to that of God.

ii. *His doctrine :* God has spoken to us, not through the mouth of any particular prophet, but through that of his Son. If the Gentiles are not to be excused because they fail to see God in his

creatures (Rom. i. 20); how much less can we be excused who have received this revelation?

iii. *His example:* of poverty, humility, zeal, mercy, etc. There was never a leader like Christ.

iv. *His redemption of us through his passion and death:* the greatest of all God's gifts. He said that he would draw all things to himself once he was lifted up above the earth on his cross. Surely the world may justly be judged and condemned if it—and the bad Christian—refuses to accept such a grace?

v. *The Eucharist:* sacrifice and food, bringing us the Author of all graces.

vi. *The treasury of his merits:* which has been left in the Church for us all. This is communicated freely to us through the sacraments, and he will be without excuse who does not take due advantage of it.

2. Confronted with so many testimonies of his love for us the bad Christian will be inexcusable if he does not follow Christ.

He will convince the world of justice

The Holy Spirit will convince bad Christians of the justice of God's claim to be believed and served, also of the justice of the saints and our own lack of it. What they did is also possible for us, but we have refused to serve. They, like us, did not see Christ on earth; but they have believed in him.

Of judgement

I. To attract men and to hold men to a holy life Christ also used the weapon of holy fear. For this reason he insists under various forms on the terrible nature of the last judgement and hell, as a warning to all.

6. St Augustine says that bad Christians will be convinced of judgement because the prince of this world has already been cast out.

(a) Satan, one of the greatest and highest of God's creatures, was condemned and cast out for one sin. Will not they also be condemned who have followed his example and have committed so many and such great sins without being warned by his fate?

(b) The inhabitants of Nineve were convinced by the preaching of one prophet. Christ will justly say to bad Christians that he is much more than Jonas was and has shouted his message louder than any prophet (Matt. 12. 41).

(c) Let us then receive the testimony of the Spirit, especially by good lives, that we may not fall under his terrible judgements, where no excuse can possibly avail us.

F: The Spirit of Truth

The Son and the Holy Ghost in the Church

1. *The Spirit acts on the church in the same way as did Christ:*
He did not come to form a new religious society, but to give the breath of life to that already founded by Christ.

2. Christ had come to give testimony to the truth (John 18. 37), and the Spirit came with the same divine purpose.

3. To see the work of the Spirit in the apostles let us consider one fact, their hardness of heart to understand what they were taught by Christ.

Their slowness to understand

1. Christ spoke to them in parables, because otherwise they would not understand (Matt. 13. 34-35). But they did not even understand the parables;
(a) for which reason they were blameworthy (Mark 15.16);
(b) and for the same reason he says to them: What is the anxiety that you have brought no bread with you? Have you no sense, no wits, even now? Is your heart still dull (Matt. 8. 17)?

2. At times they did not even understand the clear language of the miracles: They had not grasped the lesson of the loaves, so dulled were their hearts (Mark 6. 52).

3. Above all they did not understand the mystery *of* the Cross: But they could not understand what he said; it was hidden from them, so that they could not perceive the meaning of it; and they were afraid to ask him about this saying of his (Luke 9. 45).

4. Nor did they manage to understand the spiritual nature of the messianic kingdom (Matt. 18. r; 20. 21-23).

5. The Holy Spirit opened their eyes to all these things and made them understand.

The Spirit and the Teaching Church

i. *//is action on the magisterium of the Church:*
He has a most important role to play both where the apostles were concerned and also their successors.
He illuminates their minds concerning the truths revealed by Christ, and brings to their minds all that they have already been told in revealed truth.

(a) Thus Christ will not leave a written revelation . . .
But the Holy Spirit will not allow the apostles to forget what has been revealed.

(b) For the future:

i. either he inspires the sacred writers to leave in writing some of the revealed truths to form a complete group;

ii. or he acts on the Church so that none of the revealed truths is allowed to be forgotten;

iii. he causes other truths to be deduced from those already revealed—this is not new truth, but a greater explanation of things already revealed.

iv. he makes obscure things clear;

v. he guides the Church in the application to practical life of revealed truths;

vi. he inspires new formulas for these truths as time goes on—this gives us the famous dogmatic definitions of revealed truths.

2. *On the faithful in general:*

(a) As the Soul of the Mystical Body he gives life to the whole;

(b) especially through the gifts of knowledge, understanding and wisdom, he sees to it that there is a constant development in the spiritual life of the individual, through the intimate communication with God in prayer and meditation.

Conclusion

i. *We should never forget that our efforts have to be united with his:*

So that, with an ever increasing knowledge of Christian truth, the spiritual life will continue to develop in us up to that mysterious limit imposed in our case by the Holy Spirit.

Also we must co-operate in the difusion of this truth among our brothers.

(a) The greatest harm comes from ignorance.

(b) Christ came to preach:

The apostles were sent for this purpose and to give us this complete knowledge of the truth the Holy Spirit was sent.

2. *Above all, we must never forget one thing:*

(a) We must also proceed with great humility and profound confidence.

(b) The magisterium of the Church is assisted constantly by the Spirit, not merely in the doctrinal definitions etc., but also in the day to day government of the Church. This magisterium watches over divine truth and sees to it that it can bring forth its perfect fruit in each one of us.

G: Action on the world

i. *The double action of the Holy Ghost:*

In the gospel of today we are presented with a double action of the Spirit: in the Church and in the world.

(a) For the Church the Spirit is our defender and the spirit of truth:

He brings great good—so great that it is expedient for Christ to go, in order that the Spirit may do his work.

(b) There is another action on the world at large:

It can be summed up in the words of the gospel: It will be for him to prove the world wrong, about sin, and about rightness of heart, and about judging (John 16. 8). We shall limit ourselves to the sin of the world and how the Holy Spirit will accuse the world of that sin.

2. *Prove the world wrong* ('convince' in the D.V.):

(a) St Augustine understands this in the sense of reprove; St Chrysostom in the sense of convince, or prove wrong.

(b) Both meanings can be used:

i. The Spirit will reprove the world, accusing it at the same time.

ii. He will prove the world wrong just as an advocate before a tribunal brings his proofs to demonstrate to the criminal that what is brought against him is, in fact, true.

3. *The world:*

(a) In the Scriptures this world has several meanings:

i. *All created things:* In this sense it is said *of* Christ that he was in the world and the world was made by him (John 1. 10).

ii. *The whole body of men redeemed by Christ:* When God sent his Son into the world it was not to reject the world, but so that the world might find salvation through him (John 3. 17).

iii. *All that is opposed to Christ and to his Gospel:* all example, criterion, norm, custom of men or things which might separate us from Christ, make our hearts cold, weaken our faith and hope, leading us into sin.

(b) In this passage of the Gospel the word is used in this last sense, very common in the Gospel and Epistles of St John.

The Spirit will prove the world wrong in all that refers to the three lusts. At the time of Christ this world may be said to be incarnate in the Pharisees, but later it will mean anyone who teaches or practises moral doctrines opposed to the law *of* Christ.

4. *The sin of the world:*

(a) According to the Gospel, this sin can be reduced to that of not believing in Christ, a sin of infidelity which in itself includes all the rest. While unbelief remains all other sins remain, says St Thomas.

(b) Our Lord, during his public life, accused the Pharisees of this same sin: I am going away, and you will look for me, but you will have to die with your sins upon you. . . . You belong to earth, I to heaven; you to this world, I to another. That is why I have been telling you that you will die with our sins upon you . . . unless you come to believe that it is myself you look for (John 8. 21-24).

(c) We can see this same thing happen many times:

i. In the case of those who refused to believe the man born blind (John 9).

ii. In that of those who wished to kill him lest all the world should come to believe in him (John 11. 47 ff.).

(d) In his sacerdotal prayer Jesus says that:

i. his own have received the word which the Father gave him to preach;

ii. they have believed that the Father sent him;

iii. he also prays for all those who shall believe in him.

(e) But he does not pray for the world . . .

Because the world has not believed, a world of persecutors of him and his Church, which for the end of time will refuse their belief in him.

5. *To believe in Christ:*

(a) We must explain the real meaning of these words:

There are many more than would appear at first sight who do not believe in Christ, because we are not dealing merely with the intellectual belief, but also with a life lived in accordance with our belief.

(b) When St Thomas explains this passage he says that Christ does not say they did not believe me, but in me:

The real meaning of this difference is that we are expected to journey towards Christ by means of a faith which is fully formed, hoping in him and loving him. It is more, as you can see, than mere belief in his mission, his passion and his teaching.

6. *The world continues in its sin:*

(a) In that of infidelity—which applies to pagans, heretics and all those who deny a revealed truth or dogma.

(b) Those bad Christians, sinners who have allowed themselves to be carried away by the world and turn their backs on Christ.

(c) They continue like this, not because they do not know Christ, who has never been so much preached as today; but because they do not journey towards him, do not follow him, do not receive his light, but remain in darkness.

(d) The real evil of the world is not so much lack of knowledge as weakness of will, coldness of heart and indifference—and this is true of many who know Christ.

7. The Holy Spirit will convince the world of its sin:

(a) The very day of Pentecost this action began:

i. There was not merely preaching of Christ, and his resurrection, but also this teaching went hand in hand with miracles and with the fortitude of the disciples *of* Christ, ready and willing to suffer for his name.

ii. This type of preaching was a powerful proof that the Jews had been wrong when they denied and condemned Christ.

(b) The same activity of the Spirit continues today throughout the Church:

i. There are her holiness, unity and catholicity, preserved unharmed down the ages, as the most eloquent testimony of the Spirit, as soul of the Church, against the sin of the world.

ii. The Spirit also acts through the *magisterium* of the Church—the teachings of Popes, bishops and priests are eloquent testimony that the world is wrong and still in sin.

iii. The interior voice and warnings of the Spirit in the souls of sinners should be enough to convince the individual.

(c) Today, as yesterday, the activity of the Spirit in the Church is the same. There is only one difference—whereas before it was an extraordinary intervention (because of the needs of the times and the pagan world around the Church) today it is more quiet and hidden. But the activity is the same.

H: What is the world?

There are two worlds

1. The difference between them:

(a) There are two worlds, says St Augustine, one which God made and the other which is ruled by the devil.

(b) This distinction does not consider merely the material order: this was made by God and God rules over it. The physical law's are observed just as they were made by God.

(c) The reference is to the world of men, made by God, author of human nature, but also under the sway of man's free choice.

i. Man, because of this freedom, can accept or refuse to accept the laws of God.

ii. If men are governed by God then it means that they have accepted God's law; if they do not choose to accept it then they are ruled by Satan.

2. The co-existence of these two worlds:

(a) Both live together as the wheat and the cockle in the parable.

(b) Sometimes in one and the same man, at times he listens to the advice and commands *of* God, and at others he listens to Satan's temptations.

(c) Few men have 'sold their souls to the devil', and in the same wav there are few saints who are so perfect that they are always governed by the spirit of God.

Definition of the world

i. St John defines it in his epistle: Do not bestow your love on the world, and what the world has to offer; the lover of this world has no love of the Father in him. What does the world offer? Only gratification of corrupt nature, gratification of the eye, the empty [1]mp of firing (i John 2. 15-16).

2. The world then has a criterion and a spirit, just as has that of Christ.

(a) The moving factor in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, that of the eyes and the pride of life. The motivation force in the soul of the Christian is the love of the Father.

(b) The devil tempts us to lust in all its forms, while Christ illuminates the soul with his word, leading it on by his example and giving it his grace.

The two cities

1. There are two loves which create two cities or societies—one is the love of the Father, the other is the love of self. Both civilizations, if we may call them that, have to live together, and have a mutual influence, so that a man may be at one time a citizen of the w orld and another time a citizen of God.

2. Therefore the world has its starting place in the individual. It has its force of the collective conscience which it creates, the criterion it defines, the norm which it lays dowm, the customs which it gives rise to and the moral atmosphere which it sets up.

3. We have already said that individuals may easily pertain to one world and then to another.

(a) For example, a group of the faithful go to Mass and communion, thus they give good example to others.

(b) Then they come out of Mass and their criticisms of others, their backbiting, judgements on ecclesiastical matters, praise given to certain wordly things, give a bad example and disedify.

An example in the Gospels

1. The figure of St Peter gives us an illustration of the doctrine we have just explained.

2. *Before the Passion:*

St Peter confessed Christ to be the Son of God in terms which edified the other disciples; then, immediately afterwards, he refused

to accept the thought of Christ's passion and death, trying to persuade his Master to avoid them (Matt. 16. 16, 22). He contributed towards the formation in the others of a mentality which was hostile to the Passion and which never fully understood it until after the coining of the Holy Ghost.

3. *On the very night of the Passion:*

At the Last Supper Peter offers himself completely to Christ, willing to suffer and to die with him. Later that same night he enters into the worldly atmosphere of the courtyard of the High Priest and allows himself to be influenced by it to such an extent that he denies his Lord three times.

The world and the word

1. The world is the enemy of the word of Christ; the atmosphere of the world chokes it.

2. Pious souls at a time of retreat or during a mission make good resolutions and receive the word of Christ with joy.

Afterwards; in how many cases these resolutions are weakened, if not entirely destroyed, by the worldly atmosphere in which they live? 1 hey are like the seed mentioned in the gospel story, which begins well, but the lusts of the flesh, desire for riches, honours and pleasures, choke the plant before it can bring forth fruit.

I: Christ and the world in St John

An important theme

1. The teaching of the gospel about the world is of great importance when it is preached to worldly people; but perhaps it is even more important when it is taught to others who are really spiritual, not excluding priests and religious.

(a) The world is a terrible enemy of the friends of Christ. It was not for nothing that Christ spoke about it so many times to his intimate friends.

(b) Yet these same friends of Christ have to live in the midst of the world, and even those who live in an enclosed order are not altogether safe from the world's attacks.

2. Two sacred writers offer us most information about the world, St John and St Paul.

The world in St John

We shall pay special attention here to his Gospel, thinking about the first few' chapters and then paying more attention to the Last Supper discourse, the scene of today s Gospel.

The world does not know Christ

i. In the sublime prologue to the Gospel of St John we read: He through whom the world was made was in the world, and the world treated him as a stranger ('The world knew him not' in the D.V.) (John i. 10). How many ideas come to us from this small passage of profound theology.

(a) We have only to think that it is the Son of God who is in the world, yet the world refused to acknowledge him!

(b) And through the whole course of history this will be repeated —Christ living in the Church and the Church living in the world— yet the world still refuses to know him.

(c) How many practical applications there are of this truth, both in the individual and in society:

i. how many Christians there are who do not know Christ;

ii. even among those who do go to Church. To all these Christ says: Hast thou not learned to recognize me yet (John 14. 9)?

2. The Lord's lament is sharper and more penetrating because he is not known by those whom he has chosen. He came to what was his own, and they who were his own gave him no welcome. How many times he knocks at the door of hearts which refuse to open to him!

I am not of the world

1. Christ does not belong to the world, and this he affirms in the course of his dispute in the court of the temple. You belong to earth, I to heaven; you to this world, I to another (John 8. 23).

2. *The world hates me:*

(a) Christ does not only separate himself from the world, he admits that the world hates him.

(b) Even his brethren did not believe in him: For even his brethren were without faith in him (John 7. 5).

(c) He gives the reason: The world cannot be expected to hate you, but it does hate me, because I denounce it for its evil doings (John 7. 7).

(d) The world does not hate those who believe themselves to be good, who live in the midst of the world yet do not denounce it for its evil ways.

3. *The victory over the world:*

On Palm Sunday Christ announced in the temple that:

(a) The moment of decisive judgement for the world had arrived: Sentence is now being passed on this world; now is the time when the prince of this world is to be cast out (John 12. 31).

(b) We might remind ourselves of that sermon which Christ preached on the occasion of the casting out of the devil from the

deaf and dumb man, the sermon about the strong man armed for battle, but then a stronger than he comes and takes away all that he has. The strong man is the devil, the stronger than he is Christ.

The Supper Discourse

1. *The antithesis between Christ and the world:*

This discourse is where we find it clearly explained:

(a) In it our Lord condemns the world fifteen times.

(b) The theme of the battle between Christ and the world is one which runs all through the Gospel of St. John including the Last Supper discourse.

2. *The world and the Trinity:*

Christ is not content with saying that the world is the enemy of God, he represents it as the enemy of the three Persons of the Trinity one by one.

(a) The enemy of the Father:

i. Because it does not know him (John 17. 25).

ii. It hates him because it hates Christ: as it is, they have hated, with open eyes, both me and my Father too (John 15. 23).

(b) The **enemy of the Son:** we have already explained why.

(c) the enemy of the Holy Spirit:

i. because he is the spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive (John 14. 17);

ii. and because he will convince the world of its sin, also of the justice of his attacks on it and of the judgement which is to come upon it (John 16. 8-11).

3. *No compromise between the world and Christ:*

(a) Jesus is the truth, but the world cannot receive the spirit of truth (John 14. 6, 17).

(b) Christ is peace, but not the false peace of the world (John 14. 27; 16. 33).

(c) The joy of Christ and that of the world are also opposed (John 16. 20).

4. *We can find new condemnations in the Supper discourse:*

(a) Christ has overcome the world (John 16. 33),

(b) he does not pray for the world (John 17. 9).

The prayer for his disciples

i. In this beautiful prayer Christ does not pray for the world, but for his disciples: for whom the world has nothing but hatred . . . because they do not belong to the world (John 17. 9-14).

(a) He prays, not only for them, but for all those who, through the preaching of these apostles, will believe in Christ (John 17. 20).

(b) He does not pray that they should be taken out of the world, but that they should be free from its snares.

2. *Here are* the fundamental theological ideas of St John about the world:

(a) We must not attempt to flee from it, but to live in it, to defy it and to triumph over it.

(b) He loves in a special way all those who, living thus in the world, are trying to save the world from sin.

J: Where is the world?

1. *Everywhere:*

Wherever there is social life, wherever men are gathered together there will be mutual edification or scandal.

(a) It is in the convents and seminaries:

This struggle to exclude the evil spirit of the world. St Teresa said: Many of them are to be pitied; they wish to escape from the world, and thinking that thev are going to sene the Lord while fleeing from the world and its perils, they find themselves in ten worlds at once, and have no idea where to turn and how to get out of their difficulties *(Life,* Chap. 7, par. 4).

(b) It is in the world of politics:

Where ambition, envy', malice, lies, loss *of* charity and friendship, lax conscience as regards means of advancement can all lead to damnation.

(c) It is in the world of business:

In the desire for quick and easy' profits, in the use of any means to down competitors, increase one's income, put pressure on public authority', false declarations of income, defrauding of legitimate taxation, etc.

(d) It is in the world of diversion, cinema, broadcasting, television:

i. Here we can see the fomenting of all sensuality', relaxing of the moral code, spreading of harmful and even heretical opinions.

ii. Perhaps this is the world's medium which does most harm to otherwise good people.

(e) The academic world:

A world of tyranny, dominated frequently by vanity, pride or at least by sinful curiosity. In our own days especially science has set itself up to be the supreme arbiter of what should be done.

The greatest danger in this world of knowledge is that of pride, which is sometimes, if not always, united with malice.

K: The world's weapons

1. *A terrible enemy:*

It is more to be feared because, in order to triumph over us, it counts on our own help. It has an ally in the very interior of each one of us and it works on that.

2. *A deplorable spectacle:*

(a) Many Christians, their consciences deadened by passions, do not see life for what it is. They are led away by false appearances, by a passing brilliance and lying promises of happiness.

(f) Bossuet saw the scene thus:

i. the law of God buried beneath the maxims of the world;

ii. a life half pagan and half Christian;

iii. gentlemen covered with evangelical purple on to which they have sown worldly rags;

iv. the lying friendship of the world, since without God there can be no true friendship.

The maxims and methods of the world

1. *All must serve our own interests:*

(a) Let our interest be the norm of our morality.

(b) The true knowledge of how to live consists in knowing how to get richer.

2. *No injury should go without revenge:*

(a) To suffer patiently is the best way to obtain a fresh flood of injuries.

(b) Meekness is the virtue of the common people.

3. It would be madness to despise, in a life so short and unhappy as this one, the few brief moments of pleasure offered to us.

4. *The world's methods:*

(a) They are irresistible and efficacious; there is no master like the world, which teaches without dogmatizing:

i. It does not prove its opinions, being satisfied to implant them in our minds, almost without our being aware of it.

ii. It is useless to try to combat their arguments with your own. The opinions of the world insinuate themselves into our hearts almost without any formal expression of them in words.

iii. Yet everything about these subtle arguments tends to turn us to worldly pleasures and to plunge us into the vanities of this life.

(b) If you ask Tertullian he will tell you his opinion of the w'orld: I fear it and all about it, even the very air it breathes, infected as it is with so many false opinions and so many anti-Christian maxims.

Remedies against the spirit of the world

1. The first advice to be given is flee from thc spirit of the world and avoid contagion.

2. W orldly men converted again to God repeat their baptismal vows, to reject the world, the flesh and the devil.

The attack on thc world

1. *Flightfirst, then attack:*

(a) On the one hand we see today a formidable attack of the world on the cloister, in radio, cinema, television—by every means.

(b) But we also see the spirit of the cloister penetrating into the modem world, people of generous spirit who pray earnestly, fast, mortify themselves, practise the virtues each according to their state. This is the basis of our attack on the world.

2. *This is not a new thing:*

(a) We can see it foretold in the Last Supper discourse.

(b) St Francis is said to have wished to take the cloister to the world.

(c) It is a new bursting forth of the gospel spirit which makes the Church of this century rejoice to see it. She has even given it canonical approval in the secular institutes.

The weapons against the world

1. We can sum them up in the words of St Paul. Let us abandon the ways of darkness, and put on the armour of light (Rom. 13. 12). He goes on to describe the works of darkness: revelling, drunkenness, lust, wantonness, quarrels and rivalries.

2. Then he names the works of the armour of light: arm yourselves with Jesus Christ; spend no more thought on nature and nature's appetites. Prayer, fasting, abstinence, mortification, acts of charity—these are the arms of the Christian against the world.

3. Then comes our example—that of each one in his or her own sphere. This is all-important, and we are responsible before God in this matter. It should be an all-out effort to abandon the world and embrace Christ.

L: Priests in the world

They are not of the world

1. This can be said of them as it was of the apostles; but they have to live in the world.

2. W hen they are in the world through obedience and charity they are sanctified all the time in a wonderful way by God; without

knowing exactly how, they arrive at that liberty of spirit which is so precious and so desired and is possessed only by the perfect (St Teresa, *Foundations,* Ch. 5).

Special dangers through contagion

I. *The world of avarice:*

(a) The Church has warned clerics about this in can. 142, and recently this warning has been repeated in a special way.

(b) But not merely is it a question of commerce; there is also the danger that the priest will have all his thoughts fixed on making money, perhaps not for himself, but at least for the parish. There is nothing so harmful to his standing with the people as this.

(c) There are numerous documents of Leo XIII against this clerical avarice.

2. *The world of spectacles and sport:*

(a) Today this is also a real danger which has affected some clerics to such an extent that they give grave scandal to the faithful.

(b) Perhaps the best rule to work on in practice is to distinguish between what is morally right, what is convenient and what asceticism demands from us.

(c) There is a special danger in radio and television, which can take up far too much of a priest's time, which should be given to other pastoral duties. There is also the danger from the medium itself, which is not always morally good.

A permanent and universal danger

i. Ecclesiastics living in the world are all exposed to a grave danger which has been so well described by St Augustine in the City of God (bk. i, chap. 9). They are wordly, he says, who, living in contact with men who are evil livers, avaricious, impious, who do not treat them as they should be treated . . . they do not correct them or blame them:

(a) either because they are afraid to do so,

(b) or because of the trouble it implies,

(c) through human respect,

(d) so as not to lose their friendship,

(e) so as not to make enemies or lose financially by it,

(f) or simply because they wish to live at peace with all men.

How to live in the world

I. The supreme example of what the priest should be in the world is that of Christ.

(a) He did not refuse the company of anyone, rich or poor; he ate with both.

(b) He made himself all things to all men.

(c) But he was always the Master, good, kind, merciful, consoling.

2. *Four instances:*

(a) The case of Lazarus:

Not merely does he raise him to life but also he preaches that wonderful sermon on the resurrection and the life (John 11).

(b) The cure of the man with dropsy:

Christ eats in the house of the Pharisee and there he cures the sick man, giving to all a lesson in charin' and humility (Luke 14.1-4).

(c) With Simon the leper:

He eats with him and then comes the scene of Magdalen's conversion (Luke 7. 36-50). It is a sublime lesson for the Pharisee of charity and humility—and dignity!

(d) In the case of Zacchaeus:

It was almost a scandal the way Christ dealt with this man, so hated by the Jews. He had entered into the very world of avarice in Jericho. But it was to change the whole course of Zacchaeus' life and break the bonds of avarice which had so long held him in check (Luke 19. 1-10).

3. Jesus acts so as not to be absorbed by the world but so as to absorb it himself. When priests go into the world in this spirit then they need not fear that they will be contaminated by the world; on the contran', little by little they will both condemn it and save it.

Fifth Sunday after Easter

ASK AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: Janies i. 22-27 Gospel: John 16. 23-30

Texts which refer to prayer

i. *God listens to those who pray:*

(a) Examples from the history of Israel:

Gen. 21. 17; Ex. 2. 24; Dent. 4. 7; 1 Kings 7. 9, 12. 18; 2 Kings 22. 4-7; 4 Kings 13. 4; 2 Parai. 33. 13; 1 Esdras 8. 23.

(b) That of Tobias and Sara:

Tob. 3. 1-2; 12.

(c) Testimony of the Psalmist:

Ps· 3· 5> 4- 4> 9· J3> 17· 7, 2i· 6, 33· 7> 49· T5> IΣ9· b *144*· 9·

(d) The prayer of the just and of him who asks pardon:

From the wicked the Lord withholds his presence, listens only to the prayer of the just. Prov. 15. 29.

Yet they cried out upon God for pity, with hands outstretched heavenwards; and he, the holy One, the Lord God, was not slow to hear them. Ecclus. 48. 22.

Leave rebel his ill-doing, sinner his guilty thoughts, and come back to the Lord, sure of his mercy, our God, so rich in pardon. Isaias 55. 7.

Cry out to me, then, and your suit shall prosper; plead with me and I will listen. Jerem. 29, 12.

And yet we know for certain that God does not answer the prayers of sinners; it is only when a man is devout and does his will that his prayer is answered. John 9, 31.

On the upright the Lord's eye ever looks favourably; his ears are open to their pleading. 1 Pet. 3. 12.

2. *Qualities of good prayer:*

(a) A pouring out of the soul before God . . .

Sad at heart, she prayed to the Lord with many tears, and made a vow: Lord of hosts, if thou wilt take good heed of this sorrow I bear, if thou wilt keep this handmaid of thine ever in remembrance, and grant her a son, then he shall be my gift to the Lord all his life long, a Nazarite unshorn. Such was the prayer she went on repeating,

there in the Lord's presence; and Heli saw her lips moving as she did so; her lips pronounced rhe secret petition, but with no sound. Heli thought her besotted with wine; Come, he said, wilt thou always be at thv cups? Give thy stomach a rest from the wine which so bemuses thee. Nay, my lord, said Anna, thou seest an unhappy woman, unburdening her heart in the Lord's presence . . . i Kings I. io ff.

(b) With humility . . .

None but his true worshippers he makes welcome; for their supplication the clouds give passage. Pierce those clouds if thou wouldst, thou must humble thyself, inconsolable till that prayer finds audience, unwearying till it wins redress. Ecclus. 35. 20-21.

And when you pray you are not to be like hypocrites, who love to stand praying in svnagogues or at street comers, to be a mark for men's eyes; believe me, they have their reward already. But w'hen thou prayest go into thy inner room and shut the door upon thyself, and so pray to thy Father in secret; and then thy Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward thee. Matt. 6. 5-6.

(c) In a spirit of penance . . .

And Eliachim, the Lord's high priest, went about everywhere among the Israelite folk with words of comfort. Be sure, said he, that the Lord will listen to your plea, if you pray on, fast on, in his presence. Judith 4. 11-12.

(d) With faith . ..

Jesus answ ered them, I promise you, if you have faith and do not hesitate, you will be able to do more than I have done over the fig-tree; if you say to this mountain, Remove, and be cast into the sea, it will come about. If you will only believe, every gift you ask for in your prayer will be granted. Matt. 21. 21-22.

(e) With perseverance:

Buoyed up by hope, patient in affliction, persevering in prayer. Rom. 12. 12.

(f) The efficacy of prayer:

Ask and the gift will come; seek, and you shall find; knock and the door shall be opened to you. Everyone that asks, will receive; that seeks, will find; that knocks, w ill have the door opened to him . . . if you, evil as you are, know well enough how to give your children what is good for them, is not your Father in heaven much more ready to give wholesome gifts to those who ask him? Matt. 7.

7-ÏL·

And moreover 1 tell you, that if two of you agree over any request that you make on earth, it will be granted them by my Father who is in heaven. Matt. 18. 19.

,4s long as you live on in me, and my words live on in you, you will be able to make what request you will, and have it granted. John 15. 7.

3. *The duty to pray:*

(a) In the name of Jesus . . .

Whatsoever request you make of the Father in my name, I will grant, so that through the Son the Father may be glorified; every request you make of me in my own name, I will grant it to you. John 14. 13-14. Cf. John 15. 16; 1 John 5. 14-15.

(b) Without ceasing . . .

And he told them a parable, showing them that they ought to pray continually, and never be discouraged. Luke 18.1.

Use every kind of prayer and supplication; pray at all times in the spirit, keep awake to that end with all perseverance; offer your supplication for all the saints. Eph. 6. 18.

Never cease praying. 1 Thess. 5. 17. Cf. 1 Thess. 3. 10; 1 Tim. 5. 5; 2 Tim. i. 3.

(c) One for another . . .

This first of all I ask; that petition, prayer, entreaty and thanksgiving should be offered for all mankind, especially for kings and others in high station, so that we can live a calm and tranquil life, as dutifully and decently as we may. 1 Tim. 2. 1-2.

Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, for the healing of your souls. When a just man prays fervently there is great virtue in his prayer. James 5. 16.

(d) For our enemies:

But I tell you, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who persecute and insult you, that so you may be true sons of your Father who is in heaven. Matt. 5. 44-45.

Father, forgive them; they do not know what it is they are doing. Luke 23. 34.

Lord, do not count this sin against them. Acts 7. 59.

SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LITURGICAL

A: Preparation for the Ascension

While maintaining the atmosphere of Easter joy and triumph the Church begins to prepare us for the coming Feast of the Ascension, asking the Father to hear her prayers through the intercession of Christ, the Redeemer.

B: The Litanies

Those of the 25th of April are called Major Litanies, while these are called Minor, because of the solemnity attached to them both. However, it is interesting to note that those of April have a definite atmosphere ofjoy and triumph about them, while these are penitential —a strange thing in Paschal time. However, there is an explanation for this, and it is to be found in the fact that these litanies were introduced later than the April ones, and not in Rome but in Vienna. They were ordered by the Bishop of the city in order to ask God to free it from the many and great tribulations which surrounded it at the time, hence the air of penance and mortification. France took the custom up very soon, but it was much later when it became general in Rome. The major Litanies were introduced in Rome to combat the pagan feasts which were instituted to placate the god of the harvest. The Christians substituted for this a solemn procession in which they invoked the true God, giver of all good things, both material and spiritual, through the intercession of all the saints.

II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

A: The Epistle: James 1. 22-27

1. *Argument:*

In full accord with the dominant idea of St James, in this passage he insists on the explanation of the last verse of the former Sunday's epistle, in which he recommends meditation on the word which has been grafted on us until we possess it perfectly and translate it into works.

This piece can be divided into two sections; the first (w. 22-25) is concerned with the practice of the Christian life as laid down in the Gospels; the second (w. 26-27) gives a summary of that life in the precepts.

2. *Living the faith:*

The first section, by means of a clear example, demonstrates the stupidity of those who deceive themselves with the idea that they can listen to the word without living it. The Word came into this life of ours to give us an example, and therefore all those who believe in him but do not imitate him are as stupid as those who look at themselves in a mirror and immediately afterwards forget what they look like. What was the object of that glance into the mirror if not to correct defects and remove stains?

Those who hear the word of God and do not live it are like those who build their houses upon shifting sand (Matt. 7. 26); while those who live the word are changed into the brothers and the mother of the Lord (Luke 8. 21).

The spiritual mirror into which the Christian must look is the Gospel, without change or alteration. There he will see himself as he is (James 1. 24) and by correcting his defects and adjusting himself to the perfect law *(ibid.* v. 25) of love in Christ, which makes us free from the world, the devil and the lusts of the flesh. The soul finds its perfection in submitting itself to God as its Father and copying the Word in its works *(ibid.* 25) by which we merit happiness for eternity.

3. *Pure religion :*

Is this duplicity of conscience which divides religion from life as if they were two water-tight compartments a new thing? Is the doctrine new wTich centres the Christian virtues on the negative and positive precepts of charity? Let us hear St James:

(a) To believe oneself religious and not to act accordingly is to delude oneself.

(b) True religion consists in works of charity and an immaculate life.

The first thought of the apostle needs no commentary; however, we shall attempt to show how, of the three precepts mentioned by him, two refer to the negative side of charity and one to the positive care of the needy.

The sins of the tongue, back-biting, calumnies and angry words, which the apostle mentions and which he would have noticed so many times in the conduct of the Pharisees against his Master, are incompatible with the perfect law and it would be self-deceit to imagine that they were compatible.

God the Father, with the love of a father, chose a religion in which effective help would be given to the orphans and the widows. Obviously it is not St James' intention to limit the works of charity to these two classes, he merely gives them as examples, perhaps because of the interest in them shown in the Old Testament, always in the hands of the disciple, whom even the non-Christians who were Jews respected for his love of the law. On the other hand, die Acts has already given us an idea of the first charity campaign of the early Church, directed towards widows.

Finally the third precept, an active one in spite *of* the form in which it is announced, consists in keeping ourselves uncontaminated by that sinful world which those w ho are sons of God have abandoned (John 17. 14-16). As citizens of heaven they think of themselves as being in exile in its midst.

The stains of this world are, for St James, the same as they are for St Peter and St Paul. For Peter they are the pleasures of the flesh, particularly the vice of the worldly (2 Pet. 2. 19-22).

Nor should any Christian *of any age be* deceived, because St Paul's words stand for all time: Make no mistake about **it...** (these) will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6. 9-10).

B: The Gospel: John 16. 23-30

1. *The main theme:*

The apostles need not be sad, because tar from being abandoned, thev can now count on the efficient help of Christ, seated at the right hand of the Father in intercession. \ erses 29-30 represent an interruption on the part of the apostles.

2. *The text:*

(a) When that day comes, you will not need to ask anything of me . ..

Perhaps verses 16-22 of the same chapter give us the true meaning of this sentence. The *day* to which he refers here is one which begins with his leaving the tomb and continues on through Pentecost until it reaches eternity. It is the day, i.e. the era of the Holy Spirit. In that day you will not need to ask me anything, because the Spirit of Truth will have taught you all that is necessary and you will not need to wonder at ĕven moment who I am and where I am going. Or perhaps, You will not need to ask anything of me, because you will direct your petitions to the Father. They were accustomed to direct all their petitions to Christ, while they had him with them; but once he has gone to the Father it would be different, because then they would learn to go through him to the Father.

(b) Believe me, you have only to make any request of the Father in my name . ..

A solemn promise, and his words do not pass away. The words 'in my name' refer to the words which follow, i.e. the Father will grant your request in my name. In any case, the idea is the same—the apostles must ask in the name of Christ, and the Father will grant their requests in that name, i.e. because of its power before him. Jesus in need in his Mystical Body, asks the Father, while Jesus who is omnipotent at the Father's right hand, grants the request.

(c) And he will grant it to you:

At this point it is usual to ask why God does not grant so many of the requests made to him. Christ our Lord does not promise that all our prayers will be heard, but only those which ask for the joy of heaven and those things which are necessary to attain it. Even in this case we must make our request with humility', perseverance, confidence and through the merits of Christ.

(d) Make them, and they will be granted . . .

That is, from now on ask in my name and your request shall be granted.

Until this moment you have not completely understood my power as a mediator and my situation near the Father, with whom I am one. The whole of the supernatural order circles round Christ; but the

Christ who is God made man did not occupy his position near the Father as our intercessor until after his death.

To plead with the Father in the name of Christ is to take refuge in this power, but it is also something else. It is to feel onself his brother, an adopted son of the Father; it is to feel oneself a member of his Mystical Body; to feel oneself one with him. When the Christian prays then, if he does so in the right way and under the right conditions, it is Christ who prays in him and he who prays in Christ (cf. St Augustine). The Father who loves his only Son and who is well-pleased with him, cannot refuse to listen to these pleas which arc made *per Ipsum et in Ipso.*

(e) To bring you gladness in full measure . . .

This is the ultimate end and the perfection of all we have and are, the perfect happiness which began in the apostles when they saw the risen Christ and which will have its consummation in the eternal vision of God in heaven.

There is no other joy which can really satisfy us, because all the others are passing and small compared with the fact that we are capable of a greater good and have an immortal soul.

(f) I have been telling you this in parables; now comes the hour when . . .

The discourse is reaching its end, but before that our Lord wished to give them a summary of it, as he does in w. 25-28 and 32-33. He says: Even though I have spoken to you very simply and clearly, still many of the things I have said will be a puzzle to you. But the time is at hand when it will all become clear.

(g) Because the Father himself is your friend . . .

A passage which exalts the love the Father has for Christ and for us, those who have believed in him and put our love at his service. In heaven we have the intercession of Christ and the love of the Father at our disposal. What more do we need? We might also think of the many graces which have been freely given without our even asking for them.

(h) Since you have become my friends, and have learned to believe:

Here, in a few words, is the summary of much of the writings of contemporary authors—Columba Marmion, for instance, does nothing except extract from these words their full doctrinal content. My salvation depends on being loved by the Father, and he will love me if I fulfil two conditions, that of believing that Jesus is God and that of loving him. Faith and Love; from these two hope is born, together with all the other virtues. Here we have a clear expression of what union with God means and how it can be achieved, by faith and love.

SECTION III. THE FATHERS

I. ST €YPRIAN

The Lord's Prayer

1. *To pray as Christ taught us:*

The prayer given by our Lord himself:

He, among the rest of his admonitions and exhortations, where-with he advises his people for their salvation, also gave us a form of praying—himself advising us what we should pray for. He who made us live also taught us to pray, with that same goodness through which he condescended to give us everything else, in order that, while we speak to the Father in that prayer and supplication which the Son has taught us, we may be more easily heard. . . . For what can be a more spiritual prayer than that which was given to us by Christ? by whom also the Holy Spirit was given to us. What prayer to the Father can be more truthful than that which was delivered to us by the Son, who is Truth itself, out of his own mouth?... Let us therefore, beloved brethren, pray as God our Teacher has taught us. It is a loving and friendly prayer to beseech God with his own words, to reach his ears through the ven' prayer of Christ.... Since we have him as an advocate with the Father for our sins, let us, when as sinners we petition on behalf of our offences, put forward the words of our advocate. For since he says that: Whatsoever we shall ask of the Father in his name he will give us, how much more effectively do we obtain what we ask in Christ's name if we ask for it in his own words!

2. *The Our Father:*

(a) Our ...

Before all things the teacher of peace and the master of unity would not have prayer to be made singly and individually as if one were praying for onself alone. For we do not say My Father, but Our Father. . . . Our Prayer is public and common; and when we pray we do so, not for one, but for the whole people, because we the whole people are one. The God of peace and the teacher of unity, who taught it at the same time, would have it that one should pray for all, even as he himself bore us all in one. . . . Thus we find that the apostles, with the disciples, prayed after the Lord's ascension: All these with one mind, gave themselves up to prayer, together with Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the rest of the women and his brethren (Acts 1.14).

• Cf. *De oratione dominica.*

(b) Father ...

But how great is the Lord's indulgence; how great his condescension and goodness towards us, seeing that he wished us to pray in the sight of God in such a way as to call God our Father and ourselves sons of God, even as Christ is—a name which none of us would venture to use in prayer unless he himself had allowed us to pray thus. We ought, then, to remember and to know that when we call God our Father, we in our turn ought to act as God's children; so that in the measure in which we find pleasure in thinking of God as our Father, he may find pleasure in us. Let us converse as temples of God, that it may be plain that God dwells in us.

(c) hallowed be thy name . . .

Not that we wish for God that he may be hallowed by our prayers, but that we beg of him that his name may be hallowed in us.... We ask and entreat that we, who have been sanctified in baptism, may continue in that which we have begun to be. And thus we pray daily, because we have need of this daily purification—we who daily fall away.

(d) thy kingdom come . . .

We ask that the kingdom of God may be shown forth in us, just as we ask that his name may be sanctified in us. We pray that our kingdom which has been promised us by God, may come, that kingdom which was acquired by Christ's blood and passion; that we, who are his subjects, in the world, may hereafter reign with Christ when he reigns, as he himself promised, when he said: Come ye blessed of my Father, possess ye the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. . . . But there is continual need of supplication and prayer, that we fall not away from the heavenly kingdom, as the Jews, to whom this promise was first given, fell away. . . .

(e) thy will be done . . .

i. *Why do we make this petition?* Not that God should do what he wills, but that we may be able to do what God wills. For who resists God that he may not do what he wills? But since we are hindered by the devil from obeying, with our thoughts and deeds, God's will in all things, we pray and ask that God's will may be done in us; and that it may be done in us we need the help of God's good will and protection, since no one is strong in his own strength, but is only safe by the grace and the mercy of God.

ii. *The example of Christ:* The Lord, setting forth the infirmity of the humanity he bore, says: Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. And then, giving an example to his disciples that they should do, not their own will, but God's, he says: But

not my will, but thine be done. Now, if the Son was obedient to do the Father's will, how much more should the servant be obedient to the will of his master. . . . We who desire to live for ever should do the will of God, who is everlasting.

iii. *The trill of God is our sanctification:* Now that is God's will which Christ both did and taught. Humility in conversation, steadfastness in faith; modest}' in words; justice in deeds; mercifulness in works; discipline in morals; to be unable to do any wrong, and to be able to bear wrongs patiently; to keep peace with the neighbour; to love God with all one's heart; to love him because he is a Father; to fear him because he is God; to prefer nothing to Christ, because he did not prefer anything to us; to adhere to his love inseparably; to stand faithfully by his cross; when there is any contest on behalf of his name and honour, to show forth in our conversation that constancy wherewith we make confession of his name; in torture, that confidence by which we give battle; in death, that patience whereby we are crowned—this is to desire to be fellow-heirs with Christ; this is to keep the commandment of God; this is to do the will of the Father.

(f) earth and heaven .. .

We ask that the will of God mav be done both in earth and heaven, each of which pertains to the fulfilment of our safety and salvation. For since we have the body from the earth and the spirit from heaven, we ourselves are earth and heaven; and in both, that is in body and in spirit, we ask that God's will may be done. For between the flesh and the spirit there is a struggle; and there is a daily strife as they disagree with one another, so that we cannot do those ven' things which we would, in that the spirit seeks heavenly things and divine, while the flesh lusts after those which are earthly and temporal.

(g) Give us this day our daily bread . . .

This may be understood both spiritually and literally, because either way of understanding it is rich in meaning for our salvation. For Christ is the bread of life; and this bread does not belong to all men, but it is ours ... so also we call it our bread, because Christ is the bread of those who are in union with his Body. And wre ask that this bread should be given us daily, that we who are in Christ may daily receive the Eucharist for the food of salvation . . . When therefore he says that whosoever shall eat of his bread shall live forever, so it is manifest that those who partake of his body, receiving communion, are living .. . and therefore we ask that this bread may be given us daily, that we who abide and live in Christ may not depart from his sanctification and his body.

But it may also be understood in this way, that we who have renounced the world and have cast away its riches in the faith of

spiritual graces, should only ask for ourselves food and support, since the Lord instructs us and says: none of you can be my disciple if he does not take leave of all that he possesses (Luke 14. 33).

(h) Forgive us our trespasses . . .

After the supply of food pardon for sin is also asked for, that he who is fed by God may live in God, and that not only the present and temporal life may be catered for, but also the eternal, to which we may come if our sins are forgiven. . . . And how necessarily and providently are we reminded that we are sinners, since we are compelled to entreat for forgiveness of our sins, lest anyone should flatter himself that he is innocent and by exalting himself should more deeply perish.

He has clearly added the law' that we should ask that our debts be forgiven us in such a manner as we ourselves forgive our debtors, knowing that what wre ask for our sins cannot be obtained until wre ourselves have acted in a similar w'ay with regard to our debtors. Therefore he says in another place: aw ard shall be made to you as you have made aw'ard, in the same measure (Matt. 7. 2). .. . There remains no grounds for excuse on the day of judgement, when you will be judged according to your own sentence; and whatever you have done, that also will you suffer. For God commands us to be peacemakers, and of one mind in his house; and such as he makes us by second birth, such he wishes us to continue, that w'e who have begun to be sons of God may abide in God's peace, and that, having one spirit, we should also have one mind and one heart.

(i) and lead us not into temptation . . .

Moreover the Lord of necessity admonishes us to say in prayer: and lead us not into temptation. In which w'ords it is shown that the adversary can do nothing against us unless God shall have previously permitted it; so that all our fear and devotion, all our obedience, may be turned on God alone, since in our temptations no evil is permitted unless power is given from him. . . . But w'hen w'e ask not to be allowed to fall into temptation we are reminded of our own weakness and frailty, in that wre must ask, lest anyone should insolently exalt himself, taking to himself the glory of suffering or of confessing God, when the Lord himself teaching humility says: Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation; the spirit is walling but the flesh is weak.

(j) but deliver us from evil:

Comprehending all the evil things the adversary does against us in this w'orld, from w'hich there may be faithful and sure protection if God delivers us, if he affords his help to those who pray for it and implore it . . . when we have once asked for God's help and protection against evil then there is nothing further to ask for. When we have once asked God for his protection and have obtained

it, then against everything which the devil and the world work against us we stand secure and safe. For what fear is there in this life for the man whose guardian in this life is God ?

3. *The conditions ofprayer:*

(a) Union with Christ:

Behold now what was the purpose and desire of his petition (dial of Christ in Luke 22. 32), that like as the Father and the Son are one, so also we should abide in unity; so that from this it may be under-st d how greatly he sins who divides unity and peace, since for this same purpose even the Lord prayed, desirous doubtless that his people should thus be saved and live in peace, since he knew that discord cannot come into the kingdom of God.

(b) attention:

When we pray we ought to be watchful and earnest with all our hearts, intent on our prayers. Let all carnal and worldly thoughts pass away, nor let the soul at that time think on anything but only the object of its prayer. . . . How can you ask to be heard of God when you do not hear yourselves ?

(c) prayer and almsdeeds:

Petition is ineffectual when it is a barren entreaty that beseeches God, For as every tree that does not bring forth fruit is to be cast down and thrown into the fire, so also words that do not bear fruit cannot desen e anything of God. Thus Holy Scripture tells us that prayer is good when it is accompanied by fasting and almsdeeds (Tob. 12. 8). For he who will give us a reward for our labours and alms at the last day of judgement, is even in this life a merciful hearer of one who comes to him in prayer which is associated with good works.

H. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

(Some extracts from his famous homily on Prayer. PG. 63)

1. He will sometimes grant what we ask and sometimes not; in both cases to our advantage. For whether you receive an answer or not, you have received in not receiving; and whether you succeed or not, you have succeeded in not succeeding in that which you sought. For many times it is more profitable for you not to obtain what you have prayed for. Indeed, unless that which we ask for is profitable for us, it will certainly not be granted to us, so that it is equally a gain to obtain our request and not to obtain it.

2. Often God will delay, not because he is denying our prayer, but in his wisdom seeking for our perseverance and desiring to draw us ever nearer to himself; as a loving Father when asked by his son

for something will often do; witholding consent, not from the wish to refuse, hut to encourage him in steadfastness.

3. That our prayers should be heard they must first come from one who is worthy to be heard ; secondly, they should be made in accordance with the laws of God. Thirdly they should be unceasing. Fourthly it is demanded of us that we pray with earnestness, and not in a worldly manner. Fifthly, that we join with him in bringing them about by asking only for what is fitting and expedient for us.

4. Many people go into church and there they recite endless prayers, then they go out again and do not know a word of what they have said. Their lips moved, but the sense of hearing, even their minds, did not perceive anything. You who cannot hear your own prayers wish that God will!. .. Your lips recited prayers, but your attention was taken up with profit and loss, with business, with exchange, with friends.

5. It cannot be, no never can it be, that a man who prays as he ought, calling on God without ceasing, shall ever fall away ! Who rouses his mind and heart, lifting himself in spirit up to heaven and thus calling upon the Lord ; who mindful of his sins, pleads with him to forgive them, begging that he be gracious and merciful.

6. He who prays should not try after long prayers, but should pray often; for both Christ and St Paul teach us to make use very frequently of short prayers, repeated frequently at intervals. Should you pray at great length it will often happen that you open yourself to attacks of the devil, giving him ready access to your mind to distract you and upset you, leading you away from what you are saying. But if you give yourself to short, frequent prayer, dividing up the time of prayer discreetly, you will easily retain control of your mind, while making such prayer with greater recollection.

7. Nor is there so much need for the voice as for the mind ; nor for a stretching forth of the hands so much as a striving of the soul; nor for the outward sign so much as the inward reality. It was because of this that the prayer of Anna, mother of Samuel, was readily heard. Not because she cried out to God with a clear voice, but because she did so from the heart. . . . Let us then not make excuses, saying that it is difficult to pray in the midst of worldly affairs, or that there is no church near at hand. For wherever you are you can set up your own altar. No place forbids it and no time prevents it. Though you do not bend the knee, nor beat your breast, nor raise hands to heaven, if you will but make known to God your ardent faith you have offered a perfect prayer. For it is possible as you go through the market place or walk alone to make frequent prayer. It is possible, while sitting in your workshop stitching

leather, to oiler your heart to God. It is possible for the man who is selling and for him who is buying, for the one going up and the one coming down, for the person standing over the pot cooking, to make frequent and fenent prayer.

m. ST AUGUSTINE

(Some extracts from his commentary on today's Gospel, PL. 1893 ff.)

The Gospel

1. *Ask the Father anything in my name:*

But he who beheves in Christ as he really should, asks in his name and receives what he asks for, provided he asks for what is not opposed to his own salvation. And he receives what he asks for at the time which is most opportune for him; for certain things are not denied to us, but only withheld, to be granted at the proper time. In this way we are to understand the words he will give it to you. By these favours are meant those which are really expedient for the people who pray for them. The just are given their requests when they pray for themselves, not for others, whether friends or enemies, for he does not say in a general way he will give, but he will give it to you.

2. *That your joy may be full:*

That which he speaks of as joy in its fullness is certainly not material joy, but spiritual; and when it is so great that nothing further can be added to it then indeed it is full. Whatever we ask for which concerns the attainment of this joy we must request in the name of Christ; provided we understand truly what divine grace is, if we really seek the life of the blessed. Whatever else we ask for, nothing is asked for; not in the sense that it is really nothing, but because in comparison with this fullness of joy whatever else we request is as nothing.... By the words *anything* we are not to understand anything at all, but anything which is not as nothing in comparison with the life of the blessed.

3. *These things I have spoken to you in proverbs . . . the hour cometh:*

I could say that this hour of which he is speaking is to be understood of that future time when we shall see him openly, face to face ... but this meaning seems to stand in contradiction of what follows, In<that day you shall ask in my name.... We must accept the fact, I think, that Jesus is to be understood as having promised his disciples that he would change his followers from worldly minded or carnal men into spiritually minded men; not yet such as we shall be when we have a spiritual body.

4. *For the Father himself loveth you:*

Does he love us because we have loved him, or rather do we love him because he has loved us? Let the same Evangelist answer from his Epistles: We love, because he hath first loved us (1 John 4. 10). From this indeed it is that we love him, because we are loved by him. To love God is entirely a gift of God. He has given us the power to love him who, although we loved him not, has still loved us. And although we displease him, he still loves us, that there might be in us that which will please him, or at least, begin to please him. The Father loves us because we love the Son, since it is from Father and Son that we received the power to love them both; for the spirit of them both has poured out his love upon us and into our hearts, through which spirit we love both Father and Son. It was then God who has wrought in us the love by which we worship God, and he saw that it is good, and for this reason loved what he had made.

5. *Denied requests:*

Why does he say whatever you ask in my name, when we see so many of the faithful denied their requests? Is it not because they have asked badly? The Apostle James accuses us of this when he says: What you ask is denied you because you ask for it with ill intent; you would squander it on your appetites (James 4. 3). God, making use of his mercy, refuses to hear him who would make bad use of that for which he asks. If we should ask for something which, once granted to us, would do injury to us, then what we must fear is that God would grant it to us, in his wrath, instead of denying it to us in his mercy.

SECTION IV. THEOLOGIANS

I. ST THOMAS AQUINAS

Prayer

1. Prayer is an act of the reason by which we beseech or petition something from God: as Damascene says: to pray is to ask becoming things of God. Accordingly it is obvious that prayer, as we are speaking of it now, is an act of the reason (2-2. q. 83. a. 1. c).

2. *Vocal prayer:*

Individual prayer is that offered by any single person, whether he pray for himself or for others; and it is not essential to such a prayer as this that it be vocal. And yet the voice is employed in such prayers for three reasons:

i. *To excite fervour:* first in order to excite interior devotion, whereby the mind of the person praying is raised to God, because by means of external signs, whether of words or deeds, the human

mind is moved as regards apprehension, and consequently also as regards affections. . . . Hence then alone should we use words and suchlike signs, when they help to excite the mind interiorly. But if they distract or in any way impede the mind we should abstain from them.

ii. *To serve God:* secondly, the voice is used in praying as though to pay a debt, so that man may serve God with all that he has from God, that is to say, not only with his mind, but also with

iii. *Overflow from soul to body:* thirdly, we have recourse to vocal prayer through a certain overflow from the soul into the body, through excess of feeling.

3. *The parts of all prayer:*

(a) The raising of the mind to God:

There are required in all prayer three things: First that the person who prays should approach God to whom he prays; this is signified in the word prayer, because prayer is the raising up of one's mind to God.

(b) Petition:

The second is that there should be petition, and this is signified in the word intercession. In this case sometimes one asks for something definite ... or we may ask for something indefinitely, for instance, to be helped by God, or we may simply state a fact.

(c) The foundation or reason for the petition:

The third thing is the reason for asking for something; and this either on the part of God or on the part of the person who asks. The reason for impétration on the part of God is his sanctity, on account of which we ask to be heard ... The reason on the part of the person who asks is thanksgiving; since through giving thanks for benefits received we merit to receive yet greater benefits.

4. *An act of religion:*

It belongs properly to religion to show honour to God, wherefore all those things through which reverence is shown to God belong to religion. Now, man shows reverence to God by means of prayer in so far as he subjects himself to him, and by praying confesses that he needs him as author of his goods.

5. *The circumstances of prayer:*

(a) To whom should it be directed?

Properly speaking to God alone, but through the intercession of the saints. We pray to the saints, whether angels or men, not that God may, through them, know our petitions, but that our prayers may be effective through their prayers and merits (a. 4. c).

(b) Through all the saints . . .

It is God's will that inferior beings should be helped by those that are above them, wherefore we ought to pray, not only to the higher saints but also to the lower saints ... nevertheless, it happens sometimes that prayer addressed to a saint of lower degree are more efficacious, either because he is implored with greater devotion, or because God wishes to make known his sanctity (a. 11. *ad 41m).*

(c) But normally the greater the saint the greater the intercession:

The greater the charity of the saints in heaven, the more they pray for wayfarers, since the latter can be helped by prayers; and the more closely they are united to God, the more are their prayers efficacious.

6. IF*hat should be asked for?*

(a) In general, everything pertaining to our salvation, because then we are conforming our wills to that of God *(ibid.* a. 5. c. *et ad 2um).*

(b) Principally union with God (a. 1. *ad 2uiri).*

(c) Secondarily temporal things (a. 6. *ad lum):*

Now it is lawful to desire temporal things, not indeed principally, by placing our end therein, but as helps whereby we are assisted in tending towards beatitude.... We should seek temporal things, not in the first but in the second place. . . . From the very fact that we ask for temporal things, not as the principal object of our petition, but as subordinate to something else, we ask God for them in the sense that they may be granted to us in so far as they are expedient to salvation *(ibid.* a. 6).

7. *For whom should we pray?*

When we pray we ought to ask for what we ought to desire. Now we ought to desire good things, not only for ourselves, but also for others; for this is essential to the love which we owe to our neighbour. Hence Chrysostom says: Necessity binds us to pray for ourselves; fraternal charity urges us to pray for others; and the prayer that fraternal charity utters is sweeter to God than that which is the outcome of necessity.

8. *For the just and for sinners:*

We ought to pray even for sinners, that they may be converted, and for the just that they may persevere and advance in holiness. Yet those who pray are heard, not for all sinners, but for some; since they are heard for the predestined, but not for those who are foreknown to death.

9. *For our enemies:*

We are bound to pray for our enemies in the same manner as we bound to love them. ... It is a matter of obligation that we should

not exclude our enemies from the general prayers which we offer up for others; but it is a matter of perfection, and not of obligation, to pray for them individually, except in certain special cases *(ibid.* a. 8. c).

Speaking of the efficacy of prayer St Thomas states that:

(a) this is due to the grace of God *(ibid.* q. 83. a. 15. c);

(b) it is conditioned on certain dispositions in man:

i. that what is asked for is convenient *(ibid.* a. 15);

ii. that it is sought with insistence *(ibid.* a. 15 *ad 2um)}*

iii. *andfor himself(ibid.* a. 7. *ad 2um):* it is a condition of prayer that one pray for oneself; not as if it were necessary in order that prayer be meritorious, but as being necessary in order that prayer may not fail in its effect of impétration. For it sometimes happens that we pray for another with piety and perseverance and ask things relating to his salvation, and yet it is not granted on account of some obstacle on the part of the person we are praying for....

10. *Prayer in the spiritual life:*

(a) Its fruits:

i. it unites us with God *(ibid.* a. 2. *ad*

ii. excites our fervour *(ibid.* a. 9. *ad yum)*\

iii. is a source of merit and consolation *(ibid.* a. 15. c).

11. *With regard to the length ofour prayers he has this to say:*

Prayer, considered in itself, cannot be continual, because we have to be busy about other works, and, as Augustine says: we pray to God with our lips at certain intervals and seasons, in order to admonish ourselves by means of such like signs, to take note of the amount of our progress in that desire, and to arouse ourselves more eagerly to an increase thereof. ... So it is becoming that prayer should last long enough to arouse the fervour of the interior desire; and when it exceeds this measure, so that it cannot be continued any longer without causing weariness, it should be discontinued *(ibid.* a. 14. c).

II. J. B. FRANZELIN

The priestly intercession of Christ

1. *The proper function ofa priest:*

Although Christ our Redeemer concluded his special function and sacrifice on Calvary, nevertheless, he continues to be a priest in heaven, not merely because he can continue to show forth his dignity as such, but also because he perseveres in his office as mediator and intercessor until the number of the elect is completed. Not all intercession is sacerdotal, but it is the proper function of a

• From *De Verbo incarnato,* 51st thesis.

priest to practise it, since all intercession by the offering of a sacrifice and its satisfactory value and merit is but a continuation of the sacrifice itself.

2. *The Pauline testimony concerning this intercession:*

This intercession is a continuation of the sacrifice, once offered—a presentation of it before God. St Paul's comparison between the activity of Christ as mediator in heaven and that of the High Priest who entered once a year into the Holy of Holies is clear.

He has entered heaven itself, where he now appears in God's sight on our behalf (Heb. 9. 24). This is also called intercession, by the apostle: Jesus continues for ever, and his priestly office is unchanging, that is why he can give eternal salvation to those who through him make their way to God, he lives on still to make intercession on our behalf *{ibid.* 7. 24-25).

3. *Christ presents himselffor all eternity as a victim before the Father:*

The sacrifice of the Cross as presented to the Father in heaven in the person of the Lamb who was slain, shows him the price of our freedom (St Ambrose), and was so acceptable to him that even today it enjoys the same power as it did on the first Good Friday.

4. *The character and sacerdotalfunctions ofChrist:*

The dignity of Christ the priest is eternal, because after his resurrection he can no longer suffer death. So far as the functions of that priesthood are concerned it is necessary to make a distinction between the sacrifice, offered once and for all time, and the application of the sacrifice through the intercession of Christ and the ministrations of his earthly priests in the Mass. Also we must remember the fruit of that priesthood, which will be eternal in the blessed.

SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. ST THOMAS OF VILLANOVA

1. *The graces God gives me without my asking for them:*

(a) He placed me in his Church, Avhere I shall find pastures in abundance,

(b) near the waters of baptism, which I received before even opening my eyes;

(c) he guides me when, on reaching adolescence, my soul needs his light to shine on the evil of concupiscence, which tries to paint evil as good to me;

• From a sermon on prayer based on St Augustine.

(d) he keeps me on the right paths by his love; for of what use would it be to me to know the right path if my will were not helped bv him to follow it?

(e) he corrects me if I should stray from it. It is a sign of special love when a father corrects his son. There is nothing so unfortunate as the happiness of the sinner whom God does not chastise;

(f) he feeds me at the table of his teaching, the Scriptures and the Eucharist;

(g) he gives us that devotion which fortifies us in the fulfilment of good works;

(h) the ecstasies of a few privileged souls, the chalice which is full to over-flowing.

2. *The graces received but unknown to him who receives them:*

The mercy of God which rests on those who love him. Sweet Jesus; how many graces we have received from thee without knowing it! We walked along, almost asleep perhaps, and he was all the time removing the stones which might trip us up. Then there are those pleasures which you made bitter, the flowers which you made wither. ... I give thee thanks for all the obstacles you have placed in my path, which prevented me from reaching my own goal. You chose me from all eternity', placed me in your Church, washed me with the baptismal water, and all these mercies were prior to my knowledge of them. You pardoned my sins, helped me to rise again, filled my joy—and these mercies followed me always. Then came the greatest mere}· of all—I shall live in my Father's house, in the house of God. Shall I oppose resistance to a will of God so decided in my favour? Even the herds recognize the wisdom of the herdsman who guards them and obey him. Shall they be superior to me, who will not admit the goodness and power of God who shepherds me?

H. BLESSED JOHN OF ÁVILA

1. *God, quick to hear us:*

God, who to make things easier for us, kept his own commandments, now tells us that his ears are always inclined to our prayers and his eyes always upon us, so that we cannot complain and say: I have no one to care for me. It is a great consolation for the desolate to know that there is someone who will always hear their pleas and see to their wounds, even when these have no remedy. But when it is the good and merciful God who looks after me.... Blessed be God.

2. *God hears Christ in our prayers:*

Our prayer is that of Christ;

(a) because it gets its value from the grace which he has given us;

• Cf. *Audi, filia.*

(b) because it is Christ who presents it to the Father in heaven;

Therefore let us fear nothing, because it is Christ who is heard in our prayers;

(c) because we are one with Christ, incorporated into his Body:

No one is just except through Christ (1 Cor. 1. 30; Rom. 3. 10); but by his faith and love we are incorporated into him, thus we receive grace and the Holy Spirit, through which our works, useless of themselves, receive a high value. Afterwards, to preserve that grace, we need to remain united to him as branches of the vine. Being, therefore temples of God and members of Christ, our prayer is heard more easily than that which was made in the temple of Solomon.

(d) because Christ is our High Priest:

He is not merely our Head or our mediator in heaven, he is also our High Priest, so much so that no one can enter heaven except through him. There he makes continual intercession for us. He died to give life to his Body, the Church.

m. ST TERESA OF AVILA

On contemplating Christ in his Humanity

. . . And these books advise us earnestly to put aside all corporeal imagination and to approach the contemplation of the divinity. . . . I cannot bear the idea that we must withdraw ourselves entirely from Christ and treat that divine Body of his as if it were on a level with our miseries and with all created things . .. who can there be, like myself, so miserably proud that, when he has laboured all his life long over every imaginable kind of penance and prayer, has suffered every kind of persecution, he does not count himself very wealthy and abundantly rewarded if the Lord allows him to stand with St John at the foot of the cross? I cannot imagine how it can enter anyone's head not to be contented with this; yet I myself was not, and I have lost in every respect where I ought to have gained....

I can see clearly, and since that time have always seen, that it is God's will, if we are to please him and he is to grant us great favours, that this should be done through his sacred Humanity, in whom, his Majesty said, he is well pleased. I have seen clearly that it is by this door that we must enter . . . that way alone is safe. It is through this Lord of ours that all blessings come. He will show us the way; we must look at his life—that is our best model. What more do we need than to have at our side so good a Friend, who will not leave us in trials and tribulations as do our earthly friends? Blessed is he who loves him in truth and always has him at his side. . . .

When we are busy, or suffering from persecutions, or trials, when we cannot get as much quiet as we would like, as well as in times of aridity, we have a very good friend in Christ. We look on him as man; we think of his moments of weakness and times of trial; and he becomes our companion. Once we have made a habit of thinking of him in this way, it becomes very easy to find him at our side, though there will be times when it is impossible to do one thing or the other....

God is well pleased to see a soul taking his Son as a Mediator, and yet loving him so much that, even if his Majesty is pleased to raise it to the highest contemplation, as I have said, it realizes its unworthiness and says with St Peter, Depart from me, because I am a sinful man, O Lord . . .

I think, too, that his Majesty goes about seeking to prove who are the people who really love him—whether this person does or that person—and reveals himself to us with the sublimest joy, so as to quicken our faith, if it is dead, concerning what he will give us. 'See', he says, 'this is but a drop in a vast sea of blessings'; for he leaves nothing undone for those he loves, and when he sees that they accept his gifts, he gives, and gives himself. He loves everyone who loves him—and how well loved he is and how good a friend! O Lord of my soul, if only one had words to express what thou givest to those that trust in thee, and what is lost by those who reach this state and yet do not give themselves to thee! It is not thy will, O Lord, that this should be so, because thou doest more than this then thou comest to a lodging as wretched as mine. Blessed be thou for ever and ever. (Cf. *Life,* Ch. 22.)

IV. EUGENE BOYLAN, O.C.R.

Seeking Christ in Prayer

(Some short extracts from Chap. 8 of his book *This Tremendous Lover.)*

The first way of seeking God to be considered here is by prayer. Prayer, we are told, is an elevation of the soul to God. It is also described as a familiar conversation with God, and the soul's affectionate quest for God. In a special sense it is the asking of seemly things from God. In practice, we start to pray by bringing God before our minds, or more properly, by turning our mind to God. He is everywhere; and by putting aside other thoughts and adverting to his presence we can always pray to him. A definite effort is necessary to get rid of these other thoughts, and we need some idea of God to supplant them in our minds, or to occupy our imagination. This is one example of the connection between reading and prayer, for our reading plays a great part in building up our notion of God.

We can choose any way we find helpful of representing God to ourselves. Individual needs vary so much that nothing definite can be laid down. For some, perhaps, thc very notion of God is sufficient; others will form a very definite picture of our Lord's humanity in some of his mysteries; others again concentrate their attention upon thc Tabernacle or upon a Crucifix. The golden rule in this, as in all similar questions about prayer, is to pray the way one finds best. Still, there are some principles that will guide us.

Prayer in one way is a very simple thing; in another it is extremely complex. It achieves a manifold purpose, and if we keep its different ends in view we shall know better how to go about it. The first purpose of prayer is to discharge that first duty laid on man by the first Commandment: to give God due homage. That due homage includes adoration which is an acknowledgment of God's supreme dominion over us, and of our absolute dependence on him; it includes thanksgiving, for we owe everything to God's goodness; and it includes a recognition of our own state as sinners with a sincere sorrow for our offences against God and a readiness to atone for them. There is of course no need to put all these things into words every time we pray, but there should be some time every day when we make a formal protest of them in some way. And there is no better way than the way shown us by our Lord—by saying the Our Father. . . .

There is also another purpose in prayer, which is to obtain for ourselves certain graces that are necessary for us... . Some of these graces God gives us without our asking, for our Lord is always making intercession for us . . . but there are other graces, even necessary ones, that he will not give unless we ask him to do so. It is true that he already knows our needs, but it is not to inform him of them that he wishes us to ask, but rather to inform ourselves of our need of him, so that we may acknowledge him as the source of good, and that, while teaching us to have confidence in him, he may prevent us from taking him for granted....

The one condition our Lord attached to the promises he made with regard to prayer was that we should pray in his name. In other words we should pray in partnership with him, and for the benefit of his Mystical Body. United to him, we have his infinite merits at our disposal to put before God; united to him we can say to God: This is thy well-beloved Son, in whom thou art well-pleased; hear him. The disposition then for prayer are the dispositions for healthy membership of Christ: Faith, hope and charity, humility and submission to God's will. It is true that even the sinner can pray, and should pray; even he, too, must pray through Jesus Christ, relying on his infinite merits to make his prayer heard before the throne of God; but if he has not these dispositions'in actual fact, he should at least have them in desire. . . .

There is then a prayer for all times, and there is certainly a time for prayer that is natural and unstudied—when we speak to God in terms very similar to those in which we speak to our friends. We have to learn to be at our ease with God, and to realize that there is no need to keep on saying something to him. It must be admitted, however, that there is a ven' close connection between such prayer and the purity of our conscience. It is not generally possible to be at our ease with God if we have a deliberate intention of indulging in habitual sin. But repented sin is no obstacle to such friendship, nor are those sins into which we suddenly fall through frailty....

St Augustine says: No greater gift could God bestow on men than to give them as their head his Word, by whom he made all things, and to unite them as members to that head. Thus the Word became both Son of God and Son of Man; one God with the Father, one Man with men. Hence, when we offer our petitions to God, let us not separate ourselves from the Son; and when the Body of the Son prays, let it not detach itself from its Head. Let it be he, the sole Saviour of his Body, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who prays for us, who prays in us, and who is prayed to by us (in Ps. 85).

SECTION VI. PAPAL TEXTS

1. *The prayer ofpetition:*

There are some who deny to our prayers of petition any real efficacy, or who suggest that private prayers to God are to be accounted of little value, inasmuch as it is rather the public prayers offered in the name of the Church which have real worth, since they proceed from the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ. This suggestion is quite untrue. For the Divine Redeemer holds in close union with himself not only his Church, as his beloved bride, but in her also the souls of each one of the faithful, with whom he ardently desires to have intimate conversation, especially after they have received Holy Communion. And although public prayer, as proceeding from mother Church herself, excels beyond any other by reason of the dignity of the bride of Christ, nevertheless, all prayers, even those said in the most private way, have their dignity' and efficacy, and are also of great benefit to the whole Mystical Body; for in that Body there can be no good and virtuous deed w'hich does not, through the communion of saints, redound also to the welfare of all *{Mystici Corporis,* 1943).

2. *The supreme power andfirm hope comesfrom prayer:*

What would the Christian do and what would he be without prayer! And what would We be and what would We do in all that pertains to the Supreme government of the Church if that same

Church did not pray *sine intermissione,* constantly, as she did before for her first Head, St Peter, for his successor, however unworthy? (Public audience, 5 July 1939.)

3. *The youth of the soul:*

You may well say, as the priest does as he goes to the altar for the thousandth time, I go to God who gives joy to my youth. There is a youth of soul which is only maintained through frequent and filial contact with God. Prayer and Communion are your great sources of youth. Would that your example might bring to a world which is bored and egoistic a little more prayer and union with God! Close up your ranks, multiply yourselves more and more, that at least your very numbers may attract the attention of the strangers to our faith (20 June 1952).

4. *Even if God does not hear us at once, we should not lose our hope:*

No; never should you lose your hope in that God who has made you, who has loved you before you could love him and who has made you his friends. Is it not proper to friendship that the lover should long to hear the desire of his beloved simply because he longs for her perfection and good? Does not God love his creatures? Does not all the good of the creature come from God? Have confidence in God; the divine graces never arrive too late.

5. *In the name of Jesus:*

Let us lift up our prayers to heaven in the name of Jesus, because there is no other name given to men by which we can be saved. It is the name which makes our interior desires efficacious and valid, that those same desires should be the cause, under divine providence, of that which he has decided we should obtain through prayer; which does not change the immutable order laid down by him, but fulfils it. ... For that reason St Alphonsus Liguori says that he who prays will be saved, but he who does not pray will be condemned. To say that one does not need to pray because the order of his providence cannot be changed is like saying—affirms St Thomas—that it is not necessary to walk in order to arrive at a place, nor is it necessary to eat in order to feed oneself (To the newly-married, 24 June, 1941).

6. *God has not promised happiness in this world:*

Our Lord never promised to make us infallibly happy in this world. He has promised us, as we read in the Gospels, to hear us as a Father, who will not give as food to his child, even though he should ask it, a stone, or a serpent, or a scorpion; but bread, fish and eggs. . . . That which Christ, our Saviour, has promised to give us as fruit of our prayer, are not those favours which men ask for so often, through ignorance of what is best for their salvation, but that

spiritual good, that bread of the supernatural gifts which is necessary or useful tor our souls; that fish prepared by him, which as a future sign of him, the risen Christ gave as food to the Apostles on the shores of the lake of Tiberias; that egg which is the food of those who are little ones in piety and devotion, and which often men do not know how to distinguish from those harmful stones, injurious to the spiritual health, which Satan offers to them (9 July 1941).

7. *The priest and prayer:*

Perfect holiness also demands a constant contact with God; and because this close intercourse with God which the priestly souls should enjoy ought never to cease as the days and the hours go by, the Church obliges the priest to recite the Divine Office. . . . Just as the Church herself never leaves off praying, she is anxious that her children should do the same, repeating the words of the apostle: It is through him then, that we must offer to God a continual sacrifice of praise, the tribute of lips that give thanks his name to (Heb. 13. 15). To priests she has given the duty of making consecration to God, of praying also, in the name of the people, at every period of the day and in every circumstance of life. . . .

From this it follows that the priest should pray with the same intention as that of the Redeemer. Then his voice becomes, one may say, the voice of the Lord, with whom are the hosts of angels and saints in heaven and the faithful on earth, giving glory to God. It is that same voice of Christ, our Advocate, through which we receive the immense treasure of his riches. . . .

Above all else the Church recommends to us meditation, which raises the mind and heart to the contemplation of heavenly things, which guides it along God's way, and which makes it live in that supernatural atmosphere of thought and affection which is the best preparation for and the most fruitful thanksgiving after the Eucharistic sacrifice. Meditation also disposes the soul to taste and to understand the beauty of the liturgy and leads us to the contemplation of eternal truths and of the admirable lessons and teachings of the Gospels. . . .

Vocal prayer must always go hand in hand with mental prayer, along with those other forms of private prayer which, as individual need arises, help in uniting the soul with God. However, of much more value than the mere saying of many prayers is piety and a true and fervent spirit of prayer. If ever before, truly, in our days, such a spirit of prayer is a special need, when a so-called Naturalism has invaded men's minds and hearts, because of which virtue is exposed to every kind of danger. Such dangers meet a priest quite frequently in the very exercise of his ministry. If there is anything which can more surely protect you against these snares, anything

which can more surely lift your souls to heavenly things and keep them united to God it is persevering prayer and a continual beseeching of God for his help.

SECTION VII. SERMON SCHEMES

I. LITURGICAL

The Praying Church

By this we do not mean the individual faithful in their private prayers, but the whole Church as a Body, including the Pope, Bishops, priests and faithful.

(a) This Church prays, united with her Head;

(b) she has her own proper method of prayer.

A continuation of Christ

1. The Redeemer had a double mission on earth, one which concerned souls (to save them) the other related to God (to glorify Him).

2. *Christ prayed, and continues to pray and glorify God:*

(a) Both in his physical and mystical bodies; and thus he will pray until the end of time.

(b) The prayer of the Church is nothing but the prayer of Christ, continued in his mystical body.

(c) This is the liturgical prayer, which will be continued in heaven in the eternal praise of God by the blessed.

The excellence of liturgical prayer

1. *Stressed by Pius XII:*

(a) Undoubtedly the liturgical prayer, being as it is the public prayer of the Spouse of Christ, has a greater dignity than private prayer.

(b) But this superiority does not mean that there is any conflict or incompatibility between them. The two are harmoniously blended because they are both animated by the same spirit: There is nothing but Christ in any of us (Col. 3. 11). Their purpose is the same, to form Christ in us.

2. *The reasons for this excellence:*

(a) The very nature of the Church as the bride of Christ and his Mystical Body;

(b) because her prayer always rises to God through and with Christ;

(c) therefore the formula of liturgical prayer is the most beautiful of all and the most excellent.

The Breviary

1. The Mass, because of its sacrificial character, is the most excellent act of worship, the greatest act of homage we can pay to God and the most efficacious means of impétration.

2. The Church's prayer is continued in the breviary, but means of which she sanctifies the day.

3. *It is the most beautiful prayer because:*

(a) of its dogmatic background;

(b) because it is the most apt means of exciting all the affections and holy aspirations of man;

(c) it is more excellent than any private prayer because it is the prayer of the whole Mystical Body, even though recited by one individual;

(d) the psalms, which are its principal part, express all our sentiments, adoration, contrition, thanksgiving, supplication, humility, obedience, etc.

The liturgical prayer of the faithful

1. Private prayer is not liturgical, even when there are several persons taking part in it. These private prayers should be directed in some way towards the liturgical prayer of the Church wherever possible.

(a) This is being done through more the extensive use of the missal at Mass;

(b) through the custom of Vespers on Sunday evenings;

(c) through the recent decrees concerning dialogue mass, which gives the faithful great opportunities of taking a more active part in the actual liturgy itself.

2. It would be a good thing if the faithful could also be taught, little by little, to make more use of liturgical prayer;

(a) in the form of morning and evening prayers;

(b) to ask pardon for their sins (the psalm *Miserere* comes at once to our minds);

(c) as part of the preparation for communion and thanksgiving afterwards;

(d) there are liturgical forms of prayer which can cover any necessity.

II. THE EPISTLE

A: Piety without justice

A serious problem

i. It is true that the propaganda of those who hate the Church is nearly always exaggerated; but it is also true that many people seem

to try to combine the practices of piety (sometimes meticulous to the point of scrupulosity) with the lack of charity and social justice.

(a) This can often put the priest in a difficult situation, both in private and also in his preaching capacity;

(b) he should remember that he should not condemn with anger, but rather stimulate and teach.

2. We might take as a starting point the words which Isaias used against Israel.

The prophetic words of Isaias

1. *Seldom is the Scripture so energetic and emphatic:*

Cry aloud, never ceasing; raise thy voice like a trumpet call, and tell my people of their true transgressions, call the sons of Jacob to account (Isaias 58. 1).

2. *What transgressions were these?*

(a) The nations were passing through a phase of no faith; but God does not mention that. He gives it to be clearly understood that it is the believers he is talking about.

(b) He complains that, in spite of their fasts and humiliations, the hearts of the people are not being changed *{ibid.* v. 3).

(c) God will not listen to their prayers or fasts, because they were not sincere, although they appeared to be *{ibid.* v. 2). They did not love justice.

3. *In what does this lack of love for justice consist?*

Fasting, when you follow your own whim, distrain upon all your debtors! ... a better fast you must keep than of old, ere plea of yours makes itself heard above *{ibid.* w. 3-4).

4. *He tells them what they must do:*

Nay, fast of mine is something other. The false claim learn to forgo, ease the insupportable burden, set free the over-driven, away with every yoke that galls! Share thy bread with the hungry, give the poor and vagrant a welcome to thy house ; meet thou the naked, clothe him; from thy own flesh and blood turn not away *{ibid.* vv. 6 ff.).

5. Prayer and fasting without justice is useless—God makes that quite plain.

(a) Fasting as a mortification supposes the desire to dominate our passions;

(b) prayer means the desire to do the will of God;

(c) if the passion for wealth at any price is not dominated then the will of God is not done, because he wills that there should be both justice and charity in our dealings with the neighbour.

The key to the solution

1. Do you desire that the religious situation should change and that the reign of the pure religion, undefiled, should come about?

2. In that case it is necessary to complete your fast, as God demands, both with works of justice and with those of charity.

Then the Lord will listen to thee; cry out and he will answer, I am here at thy side *(ibid.* v. 9).

B: Faith and good works

The need for d works

Last Sunday we explained St James' teaching about the need for grace; now we must explain his teaching about the need for good works.

The redemption of Christ

Its effects:

(a) The death of Christ has merited that, if I believe in him and repent of my sins, grace lost through Adam will be returned to me, washing away all my sins, sanctifying me and making me a son of God by adoption.

(b) Those good works done by me in this state are also supernatural.

(c) I have no sin on my soul unless I voluntarily wish to sin.

(d) God will reward my good works with the gift of glory.

(e) Faith is necessary as the first step; then good works are also necessary as a complement of faith.

The teaching of James

1. We shall limit ourselves to a few texts which complete today's epistle:

(a) Of what use is it, my brethren, if a man claims to have faith, and has no deeds to show' for it? Can faith save him then? (2. 14).

(b) Thus faith, if it has no deeds to shew for itself, has lost its own principle of life *(ibid.* v. 17).

(c) Think of our father, Abraham; was it not by his deeds that he found approval, when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? See how his faith conspired with deeds done, and through those deeds his faith was realized *(ibid. n.* 21-22).

(d) Body separated from spirit is a dead body, and faith separated from good deeds is a dead faith *(ibid.* v. 26).

2. But we can fall into a serious error here, by thinking that it is enough to fulfil the good works of piety such as going to Mass, etc.

(a) James demands the fulfilling of all good works: and the man who has failed in one point, though he has kept the rest of the law, is liable to all its penalties *(ibid.* v. 10).

(b) He gives examples to show what he is demanding: not to do others harm by our evil speaking; not to make a distinction between our treatment of rich and poor; to be charitable to all . . . etc.

(c) Without this justice and charity combined our religion is a useless formula, without meaning so far as God is concerned. Faith alone will not save us, we must also have good works.

III. THE GOSPEL

A: The need to pray

Ask and you shall receive . . . (John 16. 24)

1. These words suggest the theme of the need for prayer.

2. Because of this text and others (Luke 11. 9) we can affirm that God has linked the granting of some of his benefits to our prayers for them.

(a) The history of nations reveals that prayer is a necessity as an essential element of religion;

(b) its institution, even in pagan cults, reveals this fact—man's need to pray;

(c) the Old Testament shows us a chosen people full of the spirit of prayer;

(d) the Church of Christ is a praying Church.

3. *Wherefore this need?*

We need to pray because we depend on God

1. In the doctrine of St Thomas we see prayer defined for us as a raising of the mind and heart to God in order to praise him and to ask for all those things we need in order to be saved. We may start from this idea in order to show the need for prayer.

2. Man is a creature, limited and dependent on someone else.

3. God, on the other hand, is the creator, who depends on no one.

4. There exists juridical relationships between man and God, a strict dependence; from this come the sentiments of adoration, gratitude, etc.

(a) On the other hand the very knowledge of our dependence leads us to seek help from the one who alone can supply us with all we need.

(b) All prayer, therefore, rests on two main ideas:
Our need and God's omnipotence.

i. God does not need our prayers in order to give his graces;

ii. but man does need to put himself into the necessary dispositions to receive them.

iii. By prayer we dispose ourselves to receive graces from God.

(c) **Hence the twofold theological foundation for the need of prayer:**

i. *The religious foundation :* God the creator to whom we owe praise; man has been created to praise, reverence and serve his God.

ii. *The one we might call a human motive :* our need of him which is as great as our need of air or food. That is why some authors speak of prayer as the breathing of the soul.

We need to pray because we are sons of God

In the supernatural order we find other reasons.

1. *The actual economy of grace:*

(a) God, in his providence, has chosen to link grace with the sacraments and with prayer; God is not bound to the sacraments, although they are the usual channels of grace; he can give his graces outside them if he chooses. Not so in the case of prayer. If we do not pray, as adults at least, we shall not receive grace.

(b) There are times when we cannot receive the sacraments; but we can always pray.

2. *The words of Christ in the Gospel:*

Ask and you shall receive (John 16. 24). Ask, and the gift will come, seek, and you shall find; knock, and the door shall be opened to you (Luke 11. 9). Pray that you may not enter into temptation (Luke 22.40).

3. *Our condition as sons of God:*

(a) We are sons by adoption in the supernatural order;

(b) prayer is as it were a reflection of our life together with God and a fruit of our sonship.

i. The Spirit dwells in us by baptism, and prayer is only a reflection of his impulse towards God.

ii. A soul cannot boast of being a friend of Jesus unless it prays.

iii. The higher and more perfect the spiritual life in the soul the more perfect will be its prayer.

The nature of this necessity

1. *Prayer is necessary by precept:*

God has commanded it, both from the natural and the divine law. This is a precept which binds:

(a) on reaching the use of reason;

(b) in danger of death and frequently during life;

(c) whenever prayer is necessary to fulfil any other precept, for example, that of penance;

(d) when a time of great temptation approaches;

(e) at the time of great public disasters.

2. *It is an essential means to salvation, in God's providence:*

(a) This means that there are some exceptions, but the general law is that those who pray will be saved; while those who do not will be condemned.

(b) In the concrete, it is necessary:

i. to obtain final perseverance;
ii. to keep the commandments;
iii. to overcome temptations.

The social aspect of prayer

Nations w'hich do not pray see vices increase, become vicious, egoistic and cruel.

1. All societies which put prayer on one side are in danger of decadence.

2. The loss of moral sense and religious sentiments in the majority of the people of any nation has as a result the loss of that nation and its subjection to foreign rule (Alexis Carrel).

B : Ways of praying

Prayer

1. *Its definition:*

The raising up of the heart and mind to God.

(a) It implies putting ourselves into contact with God as a Son with his Father: When you pray say: Our Father (Luke 11. 2).

(b) To ask him favours, first of all everything that is necessary for his glory and our salvation.

These are the two essential elements *of* prayer, where they exist there is prayer; where they do not exist there is no prayer.

2. *The union with God and charity:*

(a) The union with God which is supposed in the first of these two elements, grows together with charity,

(b) wherefore there are distinct methods of prayers.

Vocal prayer

1. *It is a most worthy act of prayer* (see St Thomas, pp. 685-6):

The Lord taught us the Our Father; he himself prayed vocally in the Garden; it has been practised by the saints.

2. *It is a necessary form of prayer:*

(a) For the simple people it may be the only method possible, or at least the first step they must take along the road of prayer.

(b) Even for others it is necessary:

The experience of the saints teaches us this, and the reasons can be found in those which demand external cult given to God.

(c) The public prayer directed by the ministers of the Church must of necessity be vocal.

3. *It must be made with attention:*

(a) It must be a prayer, and therefore made with attention and devotion:

Not necessarily a perfect attention, which our weakness at times makes impossible for us; but at least the first intention to which God attends primarily (St Thomas *in loco).*

(b) This attention can be directed at the moment of prayer:

i. either to the correct pronunciation of the words;

ii. to the ideas behind the words;

iii. to the end of all prayer, which is God and the thing asked for—this is an attention which is possible to all and necessary (St Thomas).

Mental prayer or meditation

1. This is a most important step in prayer, and it is one which is open to all who like to make the preliminary' effort necessary to acquire the habit of this type of prayer.

2. In its essence this is still prayer according to our definition, i.e. it is a raising of the mind and heart to God; but one thing has now been added, the consideration of some truth which will incline us to make acts of prayer. This needs further development.

3. *The truth we consider can be:*

(a) a virtue, in order to love it more;

(b) a vice; in order to correct it;

(c) our own defects, to correct them;

(d) a mystery of revealed truth, above all those which pertain to Christ; to love them more and imitate him.

4. The characteristic of this type of prayer is that of the use of reason to think over the truth we are considering. St Teresa tells us that, at the beginning at least, we are helped very much by books and sermons in this prayer.

5. The essential part of the prayer, however, is not the consideration, but the acts which follow from them; i.e. we should make acts of adoration, contrition, thanksgiving, supplication, humility, obedience etc. on the subject we have been considering; all, in our own words and without the aid of vocal prayer.

6. The need for mental prayer can be discovered simply in the need for examination of oneself in relation to the great truths of the faith. What is my reaction face to face with the mystery of the Incarnation, for example. How does it affect me personally? What do I have to say to God about it in prayer?

Mental prayer open to all

This brings many special advantages. It should be taught to all, even children, who can do it easily. The important factor, the aspirations or acts, should be the main body of the prayer—the considerations are only meant to awaken our devotion and start us praying. We can use any method or book we like, provided it makes us pray. It is especially useful in our thanksgiving after communion, when we have so much to say to our Lord which does not need words. Our hearts and their sentiments are enough.

C: In the Name of Jesus

Conditions that prayer may be efficacious

1. *St Thomas mentions seven* (in John 16):

These are usually reduced to three by modern authors; confidence, humility and perseverance.

2. *The Gospel is even more simple:*

(a) Believe me, you have only to make any request of the Father in my name, and he will grant it to you. Until now you have not been making any requests in my name; make then, and they will be granted, to bring you gladness in full measure (John 16. 23-24).

(b) But what does this mean—in the name of Jesus?

i. in the person of Jesus;

ii. this means that we should ask through his merits and in union with him (St Cyprian).

I am the way

1. Christ calls himself the way and the door (John 14. 6).

(a) I am the way; I am truth and life; nobody can come to the Father except through me (John 14. 6).

(b) I am the door of the sheepfold.... I am the door; a man will find salvation if he makes his way in through me; he will come and go at will, and find pasture (John 10. 7 ff.).

2. Prayer is a going in to and a resting in the Father; this filling of ourselves with his life has to be done through Jesus.

(a) His humanity is the golden bridge which unites the human race with God.

i. his passion and death are the root and source of the treasures of grace;

ii. Christ is essentially a mediator;

iii. as God he is equal to the Father; as man he is our High Priest, with full and perfect powers of mediation.

(b) Through Christ means essentially through his merits, his glorious wounds which still intercede for us before the Father.

United to Christ

1. His merits will be of little or no use to us unless we partake of them.

(a) The 'without me you can do nothing' of John 15. 5 must not merely be understood as 'without the humanity of Christ no grace would exist';

(b) the whole context asks for another interpretation; without being united to Christ we can do nothing in the supernatural order—to which prayer belongs.

i. Prayer would not be efficacious without union with him;

ii. to reach the other bank it is necessary that the bridge should touch both banks;

iii. Christ, always united with the Father, offers himself to men to take them to God;

iv. in some way we have to be united with him: As long as you live on in me, and my words live in you, you will be able to make what request you will, and have it granted (John 15. 7).

2. This is the best interpretation of *in my name*.

The greater the union the more effective will it be

1. The more we are united to Christ the more effective will be our prayer.

2. We can indicate three degrees of union; by faith, through sanctifying grace and that of sanctity, or the most perfect union of all:

(a) The miracles worked by the saints find their explanation in this perfect union.

(b) The prayer of the just man is more effective than that of the sinner:

This does not mean to say that God does not heed the prayer of the sinner; but if such a one finds his requests are not granted then let him leave his sinful state behind and renew his friendship with Christ; then his prayer will be more effective.

The power of the sacred humanity of Christ

1. There is no doubt that from it comes all the efficacy of prayer.

2. But every fresh contemplation of it and every effort to pray through it may easily bring new force and efficacy to our prayer.

3. St Teresa, a great lover of this type of prayer, tells us:

(a) Very, very many times have I learned this by experience: the Lord has told it to me. I have seen clearly that it is by this door that we must enter if we wish his sovereign Majesty to show us great secrets;

(b) therefore your reverence must seek no other way, that way alone is safe. It is through this Lord of ours that all blessings come (*Life,* chap. 22, paras. 6-7).

To know how to pray

In order to pray properly we need:

(a) to be in a state of grace and charity:

The more alive we are in this sense the more effective will be our prayer.

(b) to increase our union with Christ:

Columba Marmion says: When we pray let us come before the Eternal Father with an unshaken confidence in the merits of his Son. Our Lord has paid all our debt; he has gained all for us: *semper vivens ad interpolandum pro nobis.* ... No; God cannot reject us when we thus rely on the power of his Son; for the Son treats with Him as equal with equal (*Christ, the Life of the Soul,* p. 138).

(c) Lastly there is our prayer after Communion and also that which we make before the Tabernacle—these have special power, because then, as never before, we pray with and in Christ.

D: The efficacy of prayer

The qualities of good prayer

In the Gospel our Lord teaches us what these are:

(a) Humility; the conviction of our need:

i. by it we present ourselves to God as beggars in his sight;

ii. humble prayer has its effect, that which is made with pride does not—the story of the Pharisee and the Publican is a good example of this truth (Luke 18. 9-14).

(b) Confidence:

This springs naturally from humility, otherwise it is not true humility.

i. It would be absurd to look at oneself without afterwards lifting one's eyes to God. When we think of how miserable, weak and needy we are, the obvious thing is to lift our eyes to the Creator, source of all good.

ii. Faith gives us new motives for this firm confidence, without which no prayer can be effective.

iii. The Gospels abound in examples of miracles which were obtained through this confidence (e.g. Matt. 9. 20; 1-8).

(c) Perseverance—constancy in our asking:

i. We do not know the reasons why God, in his providence, waits a certain time before granting our requests; it may be to humble us, to seek greater glory from us or simply to prove our virtue.

ii. What is important is not to fail or lack confidence.

iii. This condition is expressly recommended in the Gospel (Luke 11, 5-13).

All prayer is efficacious

1. We are talking of that prayer which has the necessary conditions:

(a) When prayer does not come from any necessity or sincerity of heart; but when it is made with pride, egoism, without faith or love, then it can easily fail;

(b) but if it is made as it should be then it is true to say that no man ever prayed without learning something from his prayer.

2. Even though it may appear that our prayer goes unheard, we always obtain something from it, though it may not be exactly what we ask for.

This fruit may pass unseen by us, either because it comes later, or because we are distracted by other and more worldly things.

3. It might be as well to indicate some of these fruits of our prayer:

(a) Spiritual ones:

i. all prayer unites us closer to God, excites our fervour, is a source of merits and consolations;

ii. it obtains interior graces for us.

(b) Exterior:

Alexis Carrel has mentioned these in his book on prayer:

i. a sense of responsibility from the civic point of view;

ii. development of character and moral values in the individual and in the society;

iii. gives rise to a mental and physical transformation which can be likened to the activity of some of the glands of internal secretion;

iv. it can even produce positive heroism at times.

We do not always obtain what we ask for

Prayer always has some effect; but not necessarily that which we are seeking, even when we ask for it with the necessary conditions:

(a) Sometimes because it is not good for us:

i. Material things should be the object of our prayer at times, but a secondary object only.

ii. If these things are an obstacle to our spiritual good God will not need our prayer; like a good father, he looks to our real good.

iii. We can be quite sure that he will grant us something much better than the material good which has been refused.

(b) Sometimes we ought to thank God for not hearing our prayers:

Because we do not know the consequences which would follow from our being heard. He does.

(c) Because we ask for others, not ourselves:

i. perhaps these place some obstacle in the way;

ii. however, such prayer can be more meritorious than when we seek something for ourselves; in spite of its not being heard.

Perseverance in prayer

1. And he told them a parable, showing them that they ought to pray continually, and never be discouraged (Luke 18. 1).

2. The greater our prayer the more our lives will be directed towards God.

3. Especially, we should pray in times of temptation or trial.

E: The Our Father

Introduction

1. The central theme of this Sunday is prayer, one of the greatest consolations which Christ left to his disciples and the Church. We can pray in his name and be assured that our prayer will be heard.

2. Since on the other hand Christ has taught us a form of prayer, it is most important to study it, because it will be the best of all prayers.

3. *Its author:*

From this point of view also it must be the best of all prayers, coming to us from God himself.

Its content

i. As we shall see in some of the schemes which follow, the very contents of this prayer show how wonderful it is.

2. There are seven petitions which cover all that we should desire and ask for:

(a) as far as our relations with God are concerned and also with others;

(b) as far as we ourselves are concerned, both from the material and the spiritual points of view.

Its conditions

1. St Thomas mentions seven qualities which show the excellence of this prayer and which make it the best of all prayers.

2. *Because it is certain and secure:*

(a) All prayer should have this quality:

We should approach the throne of grace with confidence, as St Paul tells us (Heb. 4. 16, cf. James 1. 6).

(b) It was made by our Lord, who is our intercessor before the Father:

When we pray in his words we can be sure that our prayer is pleasing to God and will be heard.

(c) This prayer always has its effect, and can forgive venial sins:

3. *It is a suitable prayer,* i.e. asks for those things which we truly need.

(a) It is difficult at times to know exactly what is convenient for us, but Christ knew;

(b) he teaches us what petitions we should make to the Father.

4. *It is ordered,* i.e. the first things come first:

(a) spiritual good should come before material good; heaven before earth;

(b) this is the order established by Christ in the Our Father.

5. *It is devout:*

(a) devotion makes our prayer agreeable to God;

(b) this is sometimes missing because our prayer is too long and over-burdened with petitions;

(c) therefore Christ taught us a brief form of prayer in which all is contained.

6. *It is humble:*

(a) Humility is a necessary quality of all prayer:

(b) We might remember the wonderful prayer of Judith, in which she tells God that she is fully aware that He does not take into consideration power or numbers, but rather the humility' of those who plead with him (Judith 9. 16).

(c) In the parable of the Pharisee and Publican in the temple we see our Lord's example of this quality' (Luke 18. 9-14).

(d) This quality' is manifest in Our Father:

i. in it we make it quite clear to God that we do not rely on ourselves;

ii. but all our trust is in him and in his goodness and power.

F: Hallowed be thy name

An introductory invocation

I. Before we make our petitions at all we invoke God by his title of Father.

In this sense St Augustine says: What can God deny to those who are his sons, because he has deigned to make them so?

2. Christ indicates, with this invocation, that he wishes our prayer to be inspired with the sentiment of piety.

(a) We invoke a Father who is omnipotent and eternal goodness;

(b) a Father who is prompt to attend to our needs.

The first petition

1. *The sanctification of the name of God:*

The fact that Christ put this first in our prayer is enough for us.

2. *The reason is clear:*

(a) we must first ask for the end; then the means;

(b) God is our last end, therefore our first attention should be for him and his glory.

The name of God—what this means in scripture

1. In general we may say that it is God as he has made himself known to his creatures.

2. In this sense Christ uses the phrase in his last discourse: I have made thy name known to the men whom thou hast entrusted to me (John 17. 6).

The sanctification of God's name

In these first words of our prayer we ask that:

(a) God should be known, reverenced and praised on earth;

(b) that he should receive from men who know him better that praise and love which he receives from the angels;

(c) we ask that this homage should exist on earth as it does in heaven;

(d) that God should be sanctified in us (St Cyprian):

i. God has said to us: be ye holy because I am holy;

ii. therefore we ask that we who have received something of this holiness in our baptism should increase in it;

iii. and we ask for it every day because we need to progress daily in holiness, thus wiping out our daily faults;

(e) that we may not give scandal to others; on the contrary, that our conduct may be so exemplary that it will lead others to reverence the name and the majesty of God. Our light must so shine among men that they will learn to give glory to our Father who is in heaven (Matt. 5. 16).

G: The kingdom of God through the will of God

Theme of this scheme:

The next two petitions teach us the necessary conditions for obtaining the true sanctification of God's name among us.

Thy kingdom come

1. *The kingdom which is mentioned here is:*

(a) That state of justice and holiness in which God is recognized and revered by all.

(b) This kingdom has to develop like the seed or the leaven;

(c) its development is realized in this present life;

(d) but its consummation comes in the next. Then the kingdom will reach its full perfection; and the prophecies of the Apocalypse will be fulfilled (cf. Apoc. **u.** 17; 12. 10).

2. *What we ask for:*

(a) That the right which God has to reign over all men may become an accomplished fact in them as well.

(b) That he may reign in our hearts by the expulsion of sin and by the life of his grace.

(c) That in the case of those who are alive in Christ, their spiritual perfection may increase steadily.

(**d**) That we may obtain the glory of heaven, which is the true perfection of the kingdom of God.

Thv will be done

1. *In union with the former petition:*

From the practical point of view the kingdom of God in us is the efficacious recognition and fulfilment of his will in our lives.

2. *There are two kinds of will acts in God:*

Those which are absolute and which nothing can frustrate, and those which we may call 'of desire'—and this is the will by which he wants his commands to be observed. The fulfilment of this is what we pray for when we say, Thy will be done.

3. *God's will is our eternal salvation:*

(a) Here are the words of Christ on this subject:

It is the will of him who sent me, not my own will, that I have come down from heaven to do; and he who sent me would have me keep without loss, and raise up at the last day, all he has entrusted to me. Yes, this is the will of him who sent me, that all those who believe in the Son when they see him should enjoy eternal life; I am to raise them up at the last day (John 6. 38-40).

(b) God cannot will anything else for us except that the end for which we have been created shall be accomplished in us—and that is our eternal salvation.

4. *The will of God is our sanctification:*

(a) This St Paul tells us: What God asks of you is that you should sanctify yourselves (1 Thess. 4. 3).

(b) By the fulfilment of this will we become one with the divine family: If anyone does the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother (Matt. 12. 50).

(c) Because this is the means by which we achieve glory in heaven —our end.

5. *Christ is our model in this doing of God's will:*

St Cyprian says: Now that is the will of God which Christ both did and taught. Humility in conversation; steadfastness in faith; mercifulness in works; discipline in morals; to be unable to do a wrong; and to be able to bear a wrong when it is done to us; to keep peace with the brethren; to love God with all one's heart; to love him in that he is a Father; to fear him in that he is God; to prefer nothing whatever to Christ, because he did not prefer anything to us; to adhere inseparably to his love; to stand by his cross bravely and faithfully; when there is any contest on behalf of his name and honour; to exhibit in conversation that constancy wherewith we make our profession of him; in torture, that courage wherewith we do battle; in death, that patience by which we are crowned: this is to desire to be fellow-heirs with Christ; this is to do the commandment of God; this is to fulfil the will of the Father. *(On the Lord's Prayer.}*

H: Give us this day our daily bread

The second part of the Our Father

1. Until now, in three supplications, we have asked for spiritual things.

2. But the present life is one of trial—we are on probation.

(a) We must use many means to achieve our end, overcome many obstacles, in order to obtain what we have asked for in the former petitions.

(b) Christ knew all about those obstacles and difficulties through his own experience—except that of sin.

(c) The physical and moral difficulties of this life are the object of the remaining petitions of the Our Father.

The material bread

1. *The obvious and literal meaning of this petition* (cf. St Cyprian).

(a) Included in this phrase are all our material necessities required for the full development of our lives in this world.

(b) But the petition is made in such a way that the sins which usually accompany the inordinate desire for material goods are excluded.

2. *To ask with moderation:*

(a) Normally man has an inordinate appetite for material things and for possessing more than is convenient for his state of life; this

withdraws him from spiritual things and makes him too preoccupied with the things of this earth.

(b) The Lord teaches us to avoid this by asking only for bread:

i. .An expression which signifies the simplicity of our petition, we ask for what is strictly necessary for life according to our condition and state of life.

ii. Not delicate and exquisite things, but those common to all. It is to avoid the snags which the Apostle mentions: Those who would be rich fall into temptation, the devil's trap for them; all those useless and dangerous appetites which sink men into ruin here and perdition hereafter (i Tim. 6. 9).

3. *Asking for what is fitting for us:*

There are those who desire to acquire temporal goods by fraud and by the exploitation of others, a vice difficult to cure.

(a) He who steals does not eat his own bread, but his neighbour's.

(b) The usual road by which divine providence gives us our daily bread is by that of honest work, blessed by God and done for him.

4. *Ask without undue solicitude:*

(a) It is a very common sin not to be content with what one has, but to be ever asking for more:

i. *This is an inordinate desire:* It should be moderated by the state of society and necessity;

ii. *The Wise Man says:* Keep my thoughts ever far from treachery and lying; and for my state of life, be neither proverty mine nor riches. Grant me only the livelihood I need; so shall not abundance tempt me to disown thee, and doubt if Lord there be, nor want bid me steal, and dishonour my God's name with perjury (Prov. 30. 8-9).

(b) Christ makes us flee from this vice:

He teaches us to ask daily or for some definite time that which we need. As he himself says to us: Do not fret, then, asking What are we to eat? or What are we to drink? or How shall we find clothing. Matt. 6. 31.

5. *Ask with gratitude:*

(a) the danger of riches:

Absorbs all our attention; leads us to forget God, without remembering that all we have, material or spiritual, comes from him.

(b) Therefore it is opportune that in our daily prayer which he taught us, we should ask that God himself should give us our bread. Thus we shall not forget that we owe everything to him.

The sacramental bread

1. It is also included in this petition. We ask for that sacramental bread which:
   (a) nourishes;
   (b) restores;
   (c) gives strength;
   (d) increases the spiritual life of the soul.

2. *About this bread Jesus said:*
   I myself am the living bread that has come down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he shall live for ever. And now, what is this bread which I am to give? It is my flesh for the life of the world (John 6. 51-52).

The bread of the word of God

1. The word of God is the food for our spirit, the seed of life.

2. *Of it our Lord says:*
   Man cannot live by bread alone; there is life for him in all the words which proceed from the mouth of God (Matt. 4. 4).

We ask for all

This petition is accentuated by being in the plural.

1. With sentiments of fraternal charity, we must ask for all the different kinds of bread of which we have been speaking.

2. Being mindful of the fact that, most probably, in God's providence the distribution of these breads to our brothers may depend on our prayers.

I: Forgive us, as we forgive . . .

A change in the petitions

1. Up to now in the Our Father we have been asking for material or spiritual goods, but both in a positive way.

2. The last three petitions on the other hand have for their object to obtain from God the removal of evil from our lives.

3. Following the words we can search out the doctrine contained in this petition.

Pardon us . . .

1. We are all bound to recite these words of the Our Father.

2. It is necessary that all should learn a double lesson:

   (a) the lesson of humility and fear:
   i. Only Christ and our Lady were immune from sin and had no need to make this petition.

ii. All the rest of mankind without exception must make it, because we are all sinners, i John i. 8.

iii. He who feels himself to be a sinner should have sentiments of humility and fear.

(b) The lesson of confidence:

i. Even though a man may be a sinner there is no reason for him to despair; that sin will only serve to lead him into fresh ones.

ii. All the time, reiving on this prayer, we must have confidence that God will grant a generous pardon to all those who are converted to him.

Our trespasses . . .

1. *The debt of sin:*

(a) The greatest debt man contracts with God is that of sin; an infinite insult, worthy of eternal condemnation.

(b) A debt so extraordinary that man himself was unable to pay it; God had to take it on himself to redeem man from it.

2. *Christ desires that we should ask pardon for ourselves:*

(a) That is, he wishes that his merits should be applied to our souls, while we, on our part, repent for having offended him.

(b) Since we have to ask for pardon each day never let us forget that:

i. Christ has made super-abundant satisfaction for all our sins;

ii. yet from our point of view their remission will always be a free gift;

iii. the fruit of pardon will always be due to the generosity of a Father, who forgives freely.

3. Christ encourages us to seek pardon by describing God as the great pardoner, in those wonderful parables of mercy:

(a) the lost sheep (Luke 15. 3-7);

(b) the lost money (Luke 15. 8-10);

(c) the prodigal son (Luke 15. 11-32).

As we forgive them that trespass against us . . .

Our pardon is a conditional one; God will forgive us provided only that we forgive others.

1. *A peculiar petition:*

(a) It is the only petition in the Our Father which is conditioned:

He need not have included this condition; but obviously if he did so it is because of its singular importance.

(b) It is the only petition in the Our Father which our Lord repeats:

Your heavenly Father will forgive you your transgressions, if you forgive your fellow-men theirs; if you do not forgive them, your heavenly Father will not forgive your transgressions either (Matt. 6. 14 ff.).

(c) It is the petition which sums up our Lord's doctrine concerning the pardoning of our enemies, a capital point in his gospel:

Judge nobody, and you will not be judged; condemn nobody, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and gifts will be yours; good measure, pressed down and shaken up and running over, will be poured into your lap; the measure you award to others is the measure that will be awarded to you (Luke 6. 37 ff.).

2. *A petition which puts us under a stiff obligation:*

(a) In it Jesus commits us in such a way that he puts our fate in our own hands.

(b) We can never plead ignorance, because this is a petition which we shall have to repeat daily in our prayer.

3. *By means of it Jesus makes us guard two great treasures:*

(a) One individual:

i. The treasure of charity towards our brethren.

ii. What is more, it is a charity which has to be practised towards those who we consider to be our debtors, i.e. our enemies.

(b) The other is a social treasure—the peace which should exist between brothers:

i. Pardon generously given and placed in the hands of God is a great source of peace.

ii. Our petition of pardon for ourselves, conditioned as it is by our pardon of others—or not, as the case may be, reminds us of the parable of the servant.

iii. He was generously forgiven by his lord; and then he refused to forgive the small debt owed him by a fellow-servant (Matt. 18.25 ff.).

3. *Conclusion:*

If thou are bringing thy gift, then, before the altar, and remember-est there that thy brother has some ground of complaint against thee, leave thy gift lying there before the altar, and go home; be reconciled with thy brother first, and then come back to offer thy gift (Matt. 5. 23-24).

J: Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil . . .

Introduction

i. In the former petition Christ taught us the doctrine of pardon for past and present sin.

2. In these last tiro petitions he teaches us:

(a) to pray that we may avoid sin in the future by not falling into temptation;

(b) to beg God that we may be freed from all kinds of evils, sins, illnesses, adversities, afflictions.

3. *The theme:*

(a) In the first part we shall study the petition concerning temptation.

(b) In the second the last petition.

(c) Since we have already examined two kinds of evil, sin and temptation, we shall deal here with the others, i.e. adversities and afflictions.

Lead us not into temptation . . . (cf. St Cyprian, p. 678)

1. To tempt means to prove or try' someone—in effect, to try one's virtue. There is a good and bad temptation.

(a) The good temptation is that which excites us to act in a virtuous way, with a consequent increase in merit. This is the sense in which we may say that God tries us, not because he is ignorant of the result, but because he wishes us to increase in merits.

(b) Evil temptation is that which induces a man to sin, and this is not from God. Nobody, when he finds himself tempted, should say, I am being tempted by God. God may threaten us with evil, but he does not himself tempt anyone (James 1. 13).

2. *Evil tempters:*

In this petition we are concerned with the evil kind of temptation. There are many tempters to evil. They are:

(a) The flesh:

i. this tempts us in two ways.

ii. First of all it seeks the delights of the flesh, in which sin is concealed. As James says: When a man is tempted it is always because he is being drawn away by the lure of his own passions (!· U)·

iii. Again, it tempts us in so far as it is a heavy weight on the spirit, which it does not allow to seek freely spiritual good.

iv. The worst of the flesh is that it is a very part of us. This is what saddened St Paul (Rom. 7. 23-24).

(b) The devil—our great enemy:

i. *He is as strong as a lion* (1 Pet. 5. 8). Therefore against him we shall have to use every weapon in our power (Eph. 6. 13).

ii. *The mostfearsome thing about him is his cleverness.* He attacks us where we are weakest, in the disguise of an angel of light, not letting us see all the evil of his wiles at once (2 Cor. 11. 14).

(c) The world. Its two methods of tempting us:

i. It sows within us an excessive love for material things—the root of all evil according to the apostle (1 Tim. 6. 10).

ii. It plays on our fears through persecutions, by means of which it hopes to extinguish the virtue of the good (2 Tim. 3. 12).

iii. To give us strength against this powerful enemy Christ has told us: There is no need to fear those who kill the body, but have no means of killing the soul; fear him more who has the power to ruin body and soul in hell (Matt. 10. 28).

3. *What we ask for:*

(a) Christ does not teach us to pray that we may not be tempted, but that we may not consent to temptation. Because temptation resisted increases our merits before God. Therefore the Scriptures tell us:

i. My son, if thy mind is to enter the Lord's service ... prepare thyself to be put to the test (Ecclus. 2. 1).

ii. Consider yourselves happy indeed, my brethren, when you encounter trials of every sort.... Blessed is he who endures under trials (James 1. 2, 12).

(b) In the garden Christ tells the apostles to watch and pray, not in order to avoid temptation, but that they may not give way to it (Matt. 26. 41).

Deliver us from evil

In four ways God can deliver us from evil:

1. *By not allowing adversities to come upon us:*

We must remember that adversity is a normal condition of this life and that few of us can escape from it altogether.

2. *Consoling us in our affliction.*

3. *Compensating for the evils and pouring on us more good than evil:*

This light and momentary affliction brings with it a reward multiplied every way, loading us with everlasting glory, if only we will fix our eye on what is unseen, not on what we can see. What we can see, lasts but for a moment, what is unseen is eternal (2 Cor. 4. 17-18).

4. He sees to it that tribulation and temptation turn into good, because tribulations give us on occasion of merit and of a crowm of glory (Rom. 5. 3).

K: Who can ask?

Every Man

1. *Including the sinner:*

(a) The prayer of the sinner can come from a good motive and God hears him, as an act of pure mercy, given the necessary conditions.

(b) These are:
i. that he ask for himself;
ii. things which are necessary for salvation;
iii. piously;
iv. with perseverance (St Thomas, 2-2. q. 83. a. 16 c).

2. *Let it be the prayer of a man, not a child:*
Certain individual or collective petitions are truly infantile, and sometimes God will hear them, because we are not yet able to eat the strong meat of the cross of his Son; but they are not the right kind of petitions to make. Remember that God gave to the Jewish people kings to rule over them—but he did it with reluctance, knowing that oppression would soon follow (1 Kings 8).

Even Christian

1. *We must not let our passions be the guide in prayer:*
Prayer is at times far from being a real human act—it is the passions which are talking, not reason (James 4. 3).

2. *Let the Christian speak to God:*
(a) Let him ask in the name of Christ, through the merits of Christ, according to the intention of Christ and his teaching.
(b) That is why it is a good prayer and always heard, when we ask God in the name of Christ to send labourers into his harvest (Matt. 9. 38).
(c) The best prayer of all is the Our Father.

3. *Let it be a son who asks:*
(a) Ask the Father, as a father, with filial piety and confidence in his mercy as a father.
(b) It is written that confident prayer is always heard. This confidence is bom of our divine sonship.

4. *Let it be a brother who asks:*
(a) i.e. full of fraternal love;
(b) God does not hear the prayer of one who does not live in a state of fraternal charity;
(c) Christ mentions this at least twice, once during the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5. 23-24) and once during the Last Supper discourse (John 15);
(d) this fraternal charity is an essential condition of prayer.

Prayer and almsdeeds

i. That is why prayer and almsdeeds are mentioned together so many times in the Scriptures (St Cyprian).
(a) Almsdeeds are a sign that fraternal charity does exist;
(b) as in the case of Tobias (Tob. 12. 8-15) and that of Cornelius (Acts 10) prayer accompanied by almsdeeds has power to pierce the heavens.

2. *Parable of the mercy of God:*

This doctrine is confirmed by the teachings of the parable of the Lord and his servant (Matt. 18). The pardon which had been granted was revoked because of the servant's conduct towards his fellow-servant.

(a) The pardon he sought was granted—here is the mercy of the Lord;

(b) but the servant did not demonstrate fraternal charity; therefore it was revoked.

The key text (Isaias 58. 1-9)

There can be no doubt that this is the key text on this subject and one which has just as much (if not more) application today as when it was first pronounced. Therefore we shall quote it in full: Cry aloud, never ceasing, raise thy voice like a trumpet-call, and tell my people of their transgressions, call the sons of Jacob to account. Day after day they besiege me, arraign my dealings with them, a nation, you would think, ever dutiful, one that never swerved from the divine will. Proof they ask of my faithfulness, would fain bring a plea against their God. Why hast thou no eyes for it, say they, when we fasted; why didst thou pass by unheeding, when we humbled ourselves before thee?

Fasting, when you follow your own whim, distrain upon all your debtors? Nought comes of it but law-suit and quarrelling; angry blows profane it. A better fast you must keep than of old, ere plea of yours makes itself heard above. With such fasting, with a day's penance, shall I be content? Is it enough that a man should bow down to earth, make his bed on sackcloth and ashes? Think you, by such a fasting day, to win the Lord's favour? Nay, fast of mine is something other. The false claim learn to forego, ease the unsupportable burden, set free the over-driven; away with every yoke that galls! Share thy bread with the hungry, give the poor and the vagrant a welcome to thy house; meet thou the naked, clothe him; from thy own flesh and blood turn not away. Then, sudden as the dawn, the welcome light shall break on thee, in a moment thy health shall find a new spring; divine favour shall lead thee on thy journey, brightness of the Lord's presence close thy ranks behind. Then the Lord will listen to thee when thou callest on him; cry out, and he will answer, *I* am here at thy side.

L: Why do some prayers go unheard?

Always efficacious

i. *Prayer is always efficacious:*

The Scriptures say so and it is the constant teaching of the Fathers and theologians.

2. *Nevertheless^ many prayers are not heard:*

Why? St Thomas gives these reasons: when the one who prays, or the way in which he prays, or the person for whom he prays, or that which is asked for are not pleasing to the one to whom we pray (2-2. q. 83. a. 15. *ad*

3. *A fundamental condition:*

One phrase of St Thomas should always be remembered: prayer ... is efficacious in meriting, because it proceeds from charity' as its root.

At times our request is put off

At times God hears our prayer, but not at the moment when we begin to ask for something; he puts off the granting of it for various reasons:

(a) perhaps because the one who asks is not worthy in himself of obtaining what he asks;

(b) because he wishes to prove the virtue of the one who prays;

(c) because he has determined to better the petition, granting even more than the petitioner prays for;

(d) because not merely is he going to grant the petition, but also he will make it clear that this concession is due to the merits of the one who is praying for it.

2. *The unworthiness of the one who asks:*

Not because he lacks charity, but for external reasons, at times no fault of the person who asks, he is not worthy that the Lord should hear this prayer. Such was the case of David who wished to build a temple to the Lord. But God did not wish to receive this homage at his hands because of the quantity' of blood he had shed. Instead he granted it to his son.

As a proof of virtue

Such was the case of the woman of Canaan (Matt. 15.21 ff).

3. *He puts off the granting of the petition to better it:*

(a) We have an example of this in the parents of St Thérèse of Lisieux.

(b) They asked for a religious vocation—God did not grant it to them.

(c) After their marriage they asked that their son might have such a vocation; again God did not listen to their missionary zeal.

(d) They might have thought that their prayer had gone unheard; instead God gave them a daughter who was to rise to the very heights of sanctity and would become the Patroness of all missionary activities throughout the Church.

The Petition of Mary

(a) At Cana she asked for a miracle.

(b) One might have thought that our Lord's answer was in the negative.

(c) But Mary insists; we can see this is her remark to the servants. Whatsoever he shall say to you, do (John 2. 1-11).

(d) The miracle happens.

Model petitions

1. The gospel gives us several examples:

(a) Lord, if it be thy will, thou hast power to make me clean (Matt. 8. 2).

(b) Lord, he said, give me back my sight (Luke 18. 41).

(c) Jesus, Master, have pity on us (Luke 17. 13).

(d) Lord, what wilt thou have me do? (Acts 9. 6).

2. This type of prayer is even more sure of a reply when it is applied to spiritual things:

Lord, cure me of the leprosy of my sins and passions; Lord, grant me to see the vanity of the things of this world and what is the true life; Lord, show me thy will and my vocation, that I may accomplish it as St Paul did.

3. This short form of prayer is recommended by the saints and very appropriate for pious souls, especially after Communion.

The Lord's Prayer

1. St Thomas calls it the most perfect prayer of all, and St Augustine says that, if we wish to pray as we ought, then we should not ask for more than the things contained in it.

2. *It teaches us:*

To pray for things in the right order, first those which pertain to the end of our lives on earth; then those which constitute means to attain that end. Among these means some are spiritual and some material; while some are negative, in the sense of removal of the obstacles which can prevent us from reaching the end. (See scheme on the Our Father.)

M: The prayer of petition

A new petition

Christ, who told us at the Last Supper that he was going to give us a new commandment, namely that of loving one another; also tells us that he is going to tell us to practise a new form of petition.

2. The law of love had already been established; the prayer of petition was already practised; yet the words *Love* and *Ask* have a new meaning at the Last Supper.

3. The Sermon on the Mount and the Last Supper; we may compare them once again with special reference to this *Asking*.

(a) On the Mount we see God, a merciful Father in heaven, and men here below who are pilgrims towards heaven.

i. The omnipotent Father loves all his creatures and especially men;

ii. what we ask for he will grant it to us; food, clothing and also something more important than these;

iii. even before we ask him he knows our needs;

iv. we are instructed to ask first for the kingdom of heaven and its justice—then all other things will be added on (Matt. 6. 25-34).

(b) In the Cenacle:

i. now there appears, between God and man, a mediator—Christ;

ii. we are told to ask in his name and united with him;

iii. we ask for the fullness of joy in heaven.

(c) The theology of prayer of petition is much wider and more perfect in the Last Supper discourse than it was before—the whole public life of Christ lies between the one sermon and the other.

Ask anything

1. Until now, our Lord says, you have not been making any requests in my name—yet the apostles had already asked for many things.

They had asked for the first places in the kingdom; that he should teach them to pray; that he would increase their faith (Matt. 20. 21; Luke ii. i; Luke 17. 5).

2. But these were all imperfect petitions, because:

(a) They did not know what they were asking for (Matt. 20, 22);

(b) They did not ask for the kingdom of God and its justice.

3. They did not understand what this kingdom meant—they were full of the Jewish messianic idea. They showed this when they asked for the first seats in the new kingdom; and they remained in this state even after his resurrection (Acts 1. 6).

4. They had not directed their petitions towards the kingdom of heaven and eternal life. Jesus warns them that he does not esteem these former petitions, and directs them towards another, more worthy of his name and his sacrifice.

Through the merits of Christ

i. They had not asked in his name; now he warns us that we are to make our petitions in his name; i.e. through his merits and in union with him as his members; using him as our mediator.

Such petitions demand some knowledge and love of Christ; it is the new man (of St Paul) who is making them, not the old Adam. There is a new love and, in a sense, a new Father to hear us.

2. *The Father loves you . . .*

He loves all his creatures; but here there is question of a new love—the Father loves us in Jesus Christ and because we know Christ.

The Priestly prayer

There is a unity running through the whole of the Last Supper discourse; and the priestly prayer of Christ in chapter 17 sums up the whole sermon.

It is a practical lesson for us all of what we should ask for and how we should pray:

i. *Who is praying?* Jesus Christ; and through him we should all pray.

ii. *For whom?* For all those who are in some way united with him; and to whom he has revealed the nature and the power of God.

iii. *What does he ask for?* For all, eternal Life.

iv. *In what does this life consist?* In the knowledge of the Father and the Son whom he has sent.

v. *They remained in Christ*—i.e. united to him. Therefore he prays that they should all receive his own glory day in heaven.

Joy and unity

1. St Thomas says that the end of all prayer is union with God. He sums it up in the words of Ps. 26. 4: One request I have ever made of the Lord, let me claim it still, to dwell in the Lord's house my whole life long, gazing at the beauty of the Lord, haunting his sanctuary.

2. Christ develops this and consecrates it in his sacerdotal prayer: This, Father, is my desire, that all those whom thou hast entrusted to me may be with me where I am, so as to see my glory, thy gift made to me, in that love which thou didst bestow upon me before the foundation of the world (John 17. 24 ff.).

3. Hence the unity between all the faithful, of which he also speaks: (John 17. 21 ff.).

N: Temporal goods

i. There have not been wanting those who think that it is not licit to pray for material things; they base this opinion on the sermon on the mount, where we are told that we should seek the kingdom of God and his justice, then all other things will be added on to us;

in the same chapter (Matt. 6. 25) where we are told not to be solicitions for material things, etc.

2. *St Thomas replies:*

(a) Material things should not be the principal object of our prayer as should spiritual things.

(b) The solicitude mentioned by Christ is a sinful over-carefulness for material things; not ordinary care.

(c) Material things should not be sought as an end in themselves, but as a means to heaven.

(d) Therefore all requests for material things should be conditioned, i.e. we ask for them on condition that they are not harmful to our salvation.

3. *A philosophical basis:*

(a) Man's happiness is a consequence of virtue; but even virtue cannot be duly practised without a certain measure of physical and material well-being.

(b) Therefore there is nothing to prevent us from asking for that minimum in our prayers, indeed reason itself teaches us that we should so ask.

St Augustine's theory

1. We may licitly ask for what we may licitly desire. Now, we are allowed to desire material things, not principally (as putting the be-all and the end-all of our happiness in them), but certainly as means to spiritual happiness.

2. *They can help us in many ways:*

(a) since through them we sustain the bodily life;

(b) they enable us to do virtuous acts—especially acts of charity and almsdeeds.

The solution

But the perfect solution to all difficulties and the perfect formula for this prayer for material things is that given us by St Thomas, i.e. we may ask for them, and should do so, provided they are not harmful, but help us towards salvation.

1. This is the formula of St Ignatius; which does not stop us from asking for such things or from using them, provided we can maintain that holy indifference to them which is true poverty of spirit.

2. We must make use of them to secure our eternal salvation, and should God remove them at any time, or limit them in our case, then we must realize that he does so because that alone is good for us so far as heaven is concerned.

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